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**CHANGING MIGRANT SPACES AND LIVELIHOODS: HOSTELS AS
COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL UNITS, KWAMASHU, KWAZULU
NATAL
SOUTH AFRICA**

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures	4
List of Tables	5
CHAPTER ONE	6
Unveiling the Hostel's Perplexity	6
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Hostels as Spaces of Perplexity	8
1.2 Key Concepts	28
1.3 Contribution of the Thesis	34
1.4 Outline of the Thesis	39
CHAPTER TWO	41
Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks and Research Methods and Methodology	41
2. Introduction.....	41
2.1 From Dichotomization to Triangulation	43
2.2 From Triangulation to Perplexity.....	55
2.3 The Production of Space	57
2.4 Rural-Urban Continuum	62
2.5 Feminist Theoretical Framework and Qualitative Research.....	64
2.6 Research Methods and Methodology.....	67
2.6.1 Research Strategy.....	68
2.6.2 Research Questions	68
2.6.3 Choosing Research Sites: KwaMashu Hostel, eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa	69
2.6.3.1 Urban Research Site: KwaMashu CRU/Hostel	70
2.6.3.2 Rural Research Sites: eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa.....	71
2.7 Gaining Access	72
2.7.1 Gaining Access in the CRU	73
2.7.2 Gaining Access in the Rural Areas	73
2.8 Sampling Methods	74
2.9 Data Collection	75
2.9.1 In-depth, Semi-Structured Interviews	76
2.9.2 Life History Interviews	76
2.9.3 Focus Group Discussions.....	77
2.9.4 Participant Observation.....	78
2.9.5 Secondary Data Collection	78
2.10 Qualitative Data Analysis	79
2.11 The Researcher-Participant Relations.....	80
2.12 Ethical Considerations	81
2.12.1 Harm to Participants	82
2.12.2 Informed Consent.....	82
2.12.3 Deception	82
2.12.4 Voluntary Participation.....	83
2.13 Limitations	83
2.13.1 Disappointments	84
2.14 Conclusion	87
CHAPTER THREE	88
Overview: The World of Rural-Urban Connections	88
3. Introduction.....	88

3.1 The Migrant Labour System in South Africa (1886).....	90
3.2 The Hostel and the Compound System (1923).....	92
3.3 The Commencement of the Apartheid Era (1948).....	94
3.4 Establishment of KwaMashu Hostel (1958).....	96
3.5 Informal Settlements at the Hostel (1980s).....	99
3.6 Violence at the Hostels (late 1980s-1995).....	107
3.7 The New South Africa (1994) and the Community Residential Units (2004/2006) ...	110
3.8 The Functioning of the Hostel (2011).....	115
3.8.1 Key Structures Existing at the Hostel.....	116
3.8.2 Development Process (on-going).....	118
3.8.2.1 Development Process Challenges.....	119
3.8.3 Allocation Process (on-going).....	122
3.9 Conclusion.....	126
CHAPTER FOUR.....	128
Collapsing Livelihoods: Survival Strategies of Migrant Workers in the Rural-Urban Areas.....	128
4. Introduction.....	128
4.1 Sexuality: Gifts and Sex.....	132
4.2 Criminality.....	137
4.3 Livelihood Struggles: Challenging Situations and Difficult Choices.....	141
4.3.1 Phili's Situations and Choices.....	141
4.3.2 Londiwe's Situations and Choices.....	142
4.3.3 Mam Nonhle Kheswa's Situations and Choices.....	145
4.4 Unemployment.....	146
4.4.1 Employment/Unemployment Dualism Disproved.....	150
4.5 The Role of Livestock in Livelihoods Procurement.....	153
4.6 The Role of Land in Livelihoods Procurement.....	156
4.6.1 The Role of Water Supply in the Rural Areas.....	159
4.6.2 Urbanisation as a Reason for the Decline in Agriculture.....	160
4.7 The Role of Social Assistance.....	161
4.7.1 Basic Income Grant Debate.....	162
4.7.2 Social Grants and the Gender Dimension.....	163
4.7.3 The Paradox.....	166
4.8 Conclusion.....	169
CHAPTER FIVE.....	172
Cultural Formations: Gendered, Spatial, Political, Spiritual and Familial Relations..	172
5. Introduction.....	172
5.1 The Production of Gendered Spaces.....	175
5.1.1 Relations between Men and Women.....	178
5.1.1.1 Subtle Gender Fights in Hostel Bedrooms.....	180
5.1.1.2 Subtle Gender Fights over Common Areas.....	180
5.1.1.3 Subtle Gender Fights in Hostel/informal Settlements.....	181
5.1.1.4 Subtle Gender Fights in CRUs.....	181
5.1.1.5 Underlying Problems in Marital Affairs.....	183
5.1.2 Relations among Women.....	186
5.1.3 Relations among Men.....	189
5.2 Gender Roles and Responsibilities.....	190
5.3 Gender-Based Violence (GBV).....	192
5.4 Cultural Formations, Identity and Belonging.....	197
5.5 Spirituality and Religion.....	203

5.5.1 Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC) (Shembe).....	203
5.5.2 Christian Churches.....	204
5.6 Political Formations.....	205
5.6.1 Brief Historical Overview.....	205
5.6.2 Change in Political Leadership: From IFP to NFP and ANC.....	206
5.6.2.1 From IFP and ANC to IFP, ANC and NFP.....	207
5.6.2.2 Community Meetings.....	209
5.6.2.3 Contradictions within NFP leadership.....	210
5.6.2.4 Triple Membership vs. Dual Membership.....	211
5.6.2.5 Local Elections 2011.....	212
5.6.2.6 Political Views from Nongoma.....	213
5.7 Household and Housing.....	214
5.7.1 Household Headship and Gender Relations.....	221
5.8 Conclusion.....	224
CHAPTER SIX.....	226
Conclusion.....	226
6. Introduction.....	226
6.1 Main Arguments.....	228
6.2 Development Process-related Reasons for Perplexity.....	230
6.3 Gender-related Perplexity.....	231
6.4 Inter-generational-related Perplexity.....	234
6.5 Reasons for and against the Hostel.....	235
6.6 Limitations of this Study.....	237
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	239
PRIMARY SOURCES.....	239
Newspaper Articles.....	243
SECONDARY SOURCES.....	244
Books, Articles and Theses.....	244
Government Documents.....	254
Apartheid Legislation.....	255
Post-Apartheid Legislation.....	255
Online Sources.....	255
APPENDIX A.....	256
APPENDIX B.....	261
APPENDIX C.....	262

Table of Figures

Figure 2.1: Hostel and rural connections.....	44
Figure: 2.2 Rural-urban connections.....	45
Figure: 2.3 Urban dwelling.....	47
Figure 2.4: Gender and generational categories.....	48
Figure 2.5: Livelihoods	49
Figure: 2.6.1 Politics in the 1980s and 1990s.....	51
Figure: 2.6.2 Politics in late 2008	52
Figure: 2.6.3 Politics in 2011	53
Figure 2.7 Map of KwaZulu Natal Province	72

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Grants and Amounts.....	161
Table 6.1 Hostels as a Space of Perplexity.....	236

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CHAPTER ONE

UNVEILING THE HOSTEL'S PERPLEXITY

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the significance of the changes that are currently taking place at the KwaMashu hostel, the conversion of the hostel system and the transformation of migrant spaces and livelihoods. I trace the stories of hostel dwellers and the processes that take place when former single sex workers' hostels of the apartheid era are turned into Community Residential Units (CRUs). CRUs are family housing that has been designed by the government to replace workers' hostels. This thesis examines the sociology of the everyday life struggles of the migrants who live in CRUs. The "units" and the people who reside in them constitute the primary unit of analysis. Their families and social networks constitute the secondary unit of analysis. The CRUs are a significant site for the exploration of the re-definition of rural-urban connections in our society; connections which originate from the stubborn survival of migrancy as a key form of livelihoods procurement among large numbers of African working-class people.

In relying on Lefebvrian conceptions of 'the production of space' I have come to understand the *hostels as spaces of perplexity*. Lefebvre warned that when we evoke 'space' we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does that ([1974] 1991:12). My understanding of the hostels as spaces of perplexity has been shaped by the various formations and reconfigurations that are continuously taking place at the KwaMashu hostel and in hostels in general in South Africa. These reconfigurations constitute and are constitutive of the everyday life practices of the hostel dwellers which include men, women and children. They take place at different levels, including the personal, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, spatial, infrastructural, economic, political, etc. In this study, I have employed critical ethnographies which offer vantage points for generating new understandings (Hart, 2002; 2006); as a result, I argue that the KwaMashu hostel in KwaZulu-Natal province¹ should be understood as a vantage point through which we can

¹ The province of KwaZulu-Natal came into being after the merger of the KwaZulu homeland and the Natal province in 1994. It is the most populous of the South Africa's nine provinces, being home to 9.4 million of the

understand some of the key connections, interconnections, disconnections, reconnections, changes and processes that are taking place in contemporary South Africa.

The relational comparison approach emerges from critical ethnographies (*ibid.*). This approach recognises the rupture and embraces the complexity, differentiation² and multiplicity that occur in places and spaces which are normally regarded as bounded, separate and different and sometimes dichotomised. This approach is an appropriate methodological and theoretical departure point because the findings have demonstrated the socially constructed-ness and the inter-linkages of people, of genders, of spaces and places, of the relations between and among people, be they young or old, men or women, of geographies, whether they be rural or urban and even of the ways that migrants make a living, i.e. livelihood strategies. Lefebvre aimed to gain a dialectic understanding of phenomena and explain them in their totality. He worked with what was objective and subjective, structural and superstructural, old and new in different situations. “He yearned, above all, for young and old progressives to dialogue around theory and action” (Merrifield, 2006:41).

Part of the process of unveiling the perplexity would be to identify, analyse and understand the changes that have taken place since the segregation era, to apartheid through to the post-apartheid period in what was and still is famously known as KwaMashu Hostel which is now officially known as the CRUs. This demands that I problematise the function of the CRUs which can be understood as flowing out of the apartheid hostel spaces. This process revealed a number of simultaneous divergences and convergences in the stretched-out social relations, newly reproduced spaces and the meanings produced about, in and through these spaces. I was able to achieve this through a close examination of the sociology of the everyday life struggles of the migrant workers and their stretched-out social relations by exploring four main dimensions. Firstly, throughout this thesis I attempt to comprehend how hostels are construed as spaces of perplexity (described more fully below). Secondly, I try to trace the persistence of migrancy, while recognising the changing rural-urban character of current internal migration processes. Thirdly, I perceive and investigate the everyday livelihood struggles of the migrants as they are of the utmost importance to the existence of migrants, especially in the urban areas. Finally, I argue that the re-construction and re-definition of

country's 44.9 million people (Republic of South Africa, Statistics South Africa, Stages in the Lifestyle of South Africans, 1).

² “For history, too, creates its meanings through differentiation and in this way organizes knowledge about the world” (Scott: 1988:9).

cultural, political, social and spiritual associations in the reconfiguring rural-urban connections are the fundamental drivers of all the changes that are taking place in the lives of the migrants. I specifically show that, despite the planned and unplanned changes that are taking place at the hostels, hostels continue to be highly gendered spaces, which further complicates household sizes and structures. This thesis is informed by the understanding that capital made positive use of distance and differentiation (Massey, 1984:68) as has been well-documented (see Wolpe, 1972; Wilson, 1972; Mamdani, 1996). “Few people today would reject the idea that capital and capitalism ‘influence’ practical matters relating to space from the construction of buildings to the ... worldwide division of labour” (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:9-10).

1.1 Hostels as Spaces of Perplexity

Social, cultural, economic, political, spatial and demographic conditions in the hostels have undergone tremendous and sometimes harsh, unforeseen, unexpected and undesired changes. The current condition of the hostels is not what the governments – past and present - planned, foresaw or predicted. It is also not what men, the former dwellers at single sex hostels wanted at the dawn of democracy. It is still not what most of the men, both young and old, like about the hostel. It is not what the married women yearned for, as they lived separately from their migrant husbands during the apartheid regime. The current situation of the hostels is not the realisation of the dreams of young men and women, both from the urban and rural areas. The children at the hostel know for sure that the hostel is not a place where they would one day like to raise their children as they are ‘unsafe spaces’ (Interview with Zethu Khoza³, 17 July 2009). Indeed, the children are vividly aware of the negative effect that the hostel and the CRUs have had on their lives.

Basically, the hostels are not the *nice* “CRUs” that the liberation government planned to house the families of migrant workers. Hostels are also not what the men knew them to be, although most of the young women living at the hostel continue to see them as “spaces full of men”. Conversely, men who are opposed to the presence of women at the hostels see them as

³ All names used for participants are pseudonyms.

“spaces full of women and children”⁴. They are spaces full of chaos, tensions, unhappiness, contradictions, harmonies, ambiguities and continuities, discontinuities, crime and unemployment. The hostels are not what women imagined them to be; instead they are spaces full of unmet needs, unsatisfied desires, on-going livelihood struggles and they are also “*indawo yamadoda*” (a place for men) or “*indawo egcwele abantu besilisa*” (a place full of men). The CRUs did not create space for families as was desired; instead, they demolished the cultural and legal/official space that existed for men and reproduced something new and unknown. CRUs did not reunite ‘divided families’ (Murray, 1981) as was intended. Instead, they reconstructed old relations and also constructed new families/formations/ relations/forms of association between men and women, young and old, and rural and urban. This thesis, relying on an ethnographic account, intends to unveil the dynamics at play at the hostel which have not been adequately researched since the dawning of democracy.

Theoretically and practically the hostel has been a departure point as well as a point of arrival for me as it symbolises the new “spaces of migrancy”. In the process of continually moving back and forth, between past and present and rural and urban areas, confusing and enlightening as it is, I have come to realise that ‘the more things changed in the hostel, the more they remained the same’, “[t]hus production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas” ((Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:37). Merrifield argued that, “[f]or Lefebvre, the contradictions of everyday life inevitably find their solution in everyday life. How could they otherwise?” (2006:13). The hostel is a key site from which to investigate the complex and interconnected issues of space, place, gender, household, inter-generations, unequal power relations, identity, employment or lack of employment and multiple ways of livelihood procurement. Some of the interesting changes that have been taking place at the hostel include the refurbishment of the hostels and/or the setting up of CRUs to replace the former single sex hostels, shrinking formal employment, the increased presence of young, unmarried women and children from the rural areas, increased informal settlements in the surroundings of the CRUs, an increase in the crime rate, and failed attempts to abolish the informal settlements in the past 25 years. Specifically, the abolition of influx control in 1986 and the dawning of democracy in South Africa in 1994 were turning points for interesting, on-going changes in the former hostels.

⁴ Interestingly, the observation that hostels are now “spaces full of women and children” was also noted by South African scholars who did research in the hostels and compounds during the apartheid period (conversation with Dunbar Moodie at SASA conference, July 2011).

The participants in this research used many different ways to try and express the idea that I have articulated as “spaces of perplexity”. They also raised many reasons for this perplexity. There is no single explanation that can fit everybody at the hostel. The following observations by participants enable the researcher to understand the hostel as spaces of perplexity:

The reason I came to stay here was through my father but I also liked the idea of moving into a hostel because it was like a famous thing those days. It sounded nice to the people in rural areas to say one is moving into the KwaMashu hostel. I got to live in this place through lodging. The people who lodged were also registered with the main office. My father invited me to come and live with him in the hostel but I did not have bed-space then. I used to sleep on the floor until a bed was available for me. I eventually got the bed in 1986 (Interview with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, 12 March 2009).

Many hostel dwellers who were interviewed between 2009 and 2011 had a similar experience. Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo is 54 years old, from eMpangeni, married to two wives who are both based in the rural areas, had 12 children and now left with eight. He has worked for the same company for 32 years. He started living at the hostel from 1975. He has never lived in an informal settlement and in 2010 he was allocated a room in the CRUs.

People do not come to live in the hostels willingly; it is the situation that forces them to do that (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

The majority of the participants said that the rural areas are their first choice of dwelling.

The main reason why we are here [at the hostel] is because of poverty. Because you find that your father who was once working in the city never really had a house or there is nobody in the family who has once owned a house [in the urban areas], which means there is no other available place for you other than the hostel. It is easy to get accommodation in the hostel. Life is also easy at the hostel; there are also a lot of opportunities. One meets a lot of people and there is nobody who claims to own you or the place that you live in, whereas if you live in somebody's house, there are always those terms and conditions. Another thing is that if you are unemployed, living in a hostel, people are able to be patient with you and support you while if you have somebody whom you are renting with, s/he can easily be irritated with you as you are not bringing any income. Everything in the township costs money while in the hostel, you are the one who knows if you have food or not. So as I said, the reason we are here is because of poverty. As we are here, we would still like to have families in the rural areas, so when looking at how much we make, one would see that we cannot be able to support and maintain two families (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

While this participant highlights some of the advantages of living in the hostel as compared to the township, the following participants note that a hostel is both a good and a bad place:

The hostel is good because people are even able to lodge together, accommodating those who do not have a space of their own. Some people have to sleep on the floor like flies, because of lack of space. They live in groups like that until they find job opportunities. Even then, they are still not able to go out to the township and rent a room for R150 or R200 or R300 or even more (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

We are all really happy living here at the hostel but we have a problem with crime, there is currently a very high crime rate. It was fine long ago [during apartheid era] but now it is really bad. There is also a lot of un-cleanliness, dirty water flowing all over the place (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

All of the above passages were taken from the initial focus group discussions and interviews that were conducted at the hostel with men who had lived there for 20 years or more. Below are some of the things that the research participants like and do not like about the hostel:

Things I like: staying here and knowing that I am working for my children and nobody bothers me. I have lived in the township for a small period of time and I did not like it. If you are renting a room in the township, everybody pays attention to the kind of lifestyle you lead. Where and what you buy. Whereas here, if I have maas, beans and mealie-meal, I know that I am covered. When I am hungry and I do not want to cook, I can eat bread with sugar-water and that's it. Things I do not like: crime, tuckshops close early because they are scared of criminals who would come and take the money away. I do not like sharing a room with strangers. I do not like to share a toilet with other people (Interview with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, 12 March 2009).

The idea that 'this is not our place' makes them not to take care of their place, they know that they are temporarily there so when you get there you see that things that should be their responsibility to keep clean and not the government will not be cleaned. They leave it as is; therefore this is a huge challenge. The question is how do you develop an area like that? We have invested lots of money there, millions of Rands, building the CRUs, but you can see that in no time, they will be in a state of decay because they do not like their place of residence (Interview with African National Congress (ANC) Cllr, 26 November 2010).

Unlike the Inkatha Freedom Party ward councillor, the ANC ward councillor does not and never has lived at the hostel. For the first time in its history, the ANC won a reasonable number of votes from the hostel in the 2008 elections. However, the area that the ANC councillor is responsible for covers KwaMashu Township section C and D as well, unlike the IFP councillor who only covers one section of the hostel area, which is KwaMashu section A.

The things I like: Living by myself, freedom and transport is close by. The things I do not like: the presence of women and crime (Interview with Mr Dumisani Ngcobo, 11 March 2009).

Mr Dumisani Ngcobo was a block chairman who had a unit with one bedroom all to himself. He was also married to two wives, with one living in the rural area and the other living in the township. He had a girlfriend at the hostel and they have a three-year old child. The girlfriend lives at the hostel. He clearly liked his personal space and enjoyed his privacy.

Nomkhosi: What changes would you like to see taking place in the hostel?

Zethu: I would like to see the crime rate go down, we are even scared to walk in the night.

Nomkhosi: Can you compare how the hostel was before you went to live in the rural areas and now?

Zethu: No I can't, I was too little.

Nomkhosi: Do you know the history about the hostels?

Zethu: No I don't, I only know that women were not allowed to live.

Nomkhosi: Do you think this place has the majority of girl or boy children?

Zethu: Boy majority.

Nomkhosi: Why do you say that?

Zethu: I think many people do not want to bring their girls here because it is not safe, they quickly get boyfriends.

Nomkhosi: Would you like to live here when you get married with your family?

Zethu: No.

Nomkhosi: Why?

Zethu: It is totally not safe (Interview with Zethu Mthembu, 17 July 2009).

Zethu Mthembu is a 19 year old girl; she and her siblings were born from the hostel, were sent to the rural area for a couple of years, and have now come back to live with their father and mother at the hostel.

It [CRUs] is good for people to live with their families. But the government did not think what would be suitable for us. We have families and children in the villages; we cannot move our families from rural areas to here. Life here is expensive. Whatever changes will cause men to focus here and their partners who are here. The families in the villages will suffer. This will put us on a hot spot. Partly it is good because people will have their own space. Our children will be able to have a place to stay when they come here to further their education. Another problem is that we feel that the double story rooms they are building will not be enough to accommodate all these people who live here in the hostels (in block houses as well as in shacks). Having people without a place to stay will be a problem. It would be better if they were building five-story buildings (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

There is so much concern and worry about the present and uncertainty about the future that the hostel dwellers argued that “it was better in Egypt”. “Egypt” refers to the “apartheid era”.

Participant 1: If things went my way, the government would be reminded that a hostel is still a hostel. I am sure that the municipality would want the rent, which could force you to vacate the house with your family, [if you do not pay rent because this is not your house but a hostel]. That’s why I am saying that the government should always remember that this is a hostel. The government should show that it belongs to us [Blacks] and do things which favour us (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 2: Would it not be possible to request that the children, after the retirement of their father, and he goes back home that they continue living there until they finish their studies because it would not be humane to take them out of the accommodation while they are studying. He can then continue renting for the children (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 3: That all depend on the government, because it is the one which knows what intentions it has about its buildings. Because it is possible that the father cannot pay rent as he lost his job but children still needs accommodation to further their studies. The government should not terminate the initial aim of the hostels because in that way, rent would not go up unreasonably. It [the government] should play a big role in subsidizing the housing for people from rural areas (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 4: I am not happy with the number of the rooms in the newly built hostels. It [the hostel/storeys] should go up a bit more so that it can accommodate all these people who are living in the hostels right now (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 1 feels that the hostel is still a hostel. This means that the participant(s) disregards any changes that are taking place at the hostel as well as at a policy level. On the other hand, it might mean that the participant does not know that the hostel has been changed into CRUs. While he can see the infrastructural changes, these do not imply changes in the significant and traditional existence of the hostels. For men at the hostels, it is easy to argue that CRUs are meaningless if they are about the presence of women and children, because men know that women and children were living at the hostel long before the construction of the ‘family units’. They could argue that the hostel was a hostel for men before the presence of women and children; it continued to be the hostel for men when women and children came through and it remains *indawo yamadoda* (place of men) even when the government has constructed what it calls the CRUs. According to the men, they are happy to continue to observe the rules of the hostels, i.e. to pay low monthly rent or be chucked out of the hostel because of non-payment. The participants expect a different kind of treatment from that meted out by the apartheid government.

Participant 2 raises an issue that they did not have to worry about in the past. During the apartheid era, male children who came to the urban areas study long did not lose their bed when their parent died or retired. Good social networks ensured that others at the hostel looked after them, as was the case with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, who secured bed-space for the son of his late friend. It is an issue now because girl-children are living with their parents at the hostels. Participant 3 conveys feelings of exclusion and inferiority. Participant 4 raises concerns about a lack of space.

Participant 1: There is only going to be a difference now, as you can see, they are building new houses; each person will have his own bedroom. This is a process which has just started (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 2: Long ago, while we were still under the municipality of the old government, it was much better. The municipality had people who cleaned hostels, toilets and cut grass. Everything was alright in the hostels. Since the reign of the new government, all those services stopped; there is no municipal cleaning which took place. One would find blocked toilets and one would not know what to do. There is no cleanliness in the hostels. But we do not know what will the change in CRUs bring for us, perhaps there is something better that is coming for us but we do not know that yet (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 1: When the ruling government came in to power, everything went wrong. If one complains to the block chairmen there is nothing much that they can do as well. They can only report that and nothing happens (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 2: Long ago, we used to be able to formally remove people from certain rooms if they were not able to abide by the rules of that room. We would report them at the office and they would be removed. There was nobody who could tell you that this is not your house because municipality said this is the place for people who came to work. But now, we can't sleep as people play loud music in the night. You can't complain because a person will tell you that this is not your home or house. If the radio is making noise from another room, there is nothing you can do. We used to think that this was our place to rest after work, but now there is no rest (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Asked about channels for registering complaints, the participants responded:

Participant 1: The block chairman would be in his room by then and also there is no right to remove a person from his room (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 2: To add on that note, long ago the municipality had hostel police officers (*ama-Blackjack*) who were always around to maintain peace, but now there is nobody to do that. There was not so much killing, but now it's not safe anymore. These days anybody can have a gun. While it only used to be police officers who carried guns and

could shoot people, but now, one only has to be 21 years and s/he can buy a gun and shoot anybody and nothing happens to them. Even the block chairman is useless these days. There is a man who was a block chairman who died here when he went to resolve a quarrel between the hostel residents (Focus Group Discussion, 09 May 2009).

Participant 3: I came here at KwaMashu hostel in 1967. There was so much peace in this community of hostels. Women were not allowed to come into the hostel area. A woman would walk on the road on the other side (area 14) as this area was for insiders. She was not allowed to come in here. She would end up in the office, while her husband was at work. Police officers would come to the hostel to call the husband of that woman. But today we are being abused by the situation here, especially us who came first here while the law was strict and the hostel was under supervision. Now we have families that we do not know. We do not know as to how these women forsook their families. Now we have the problem with them. Each block room used to have four beds for the hostel dwellers and men started covering their beds. It's called *ukudiyadiya*; that was really hurtful/*hlukumezeke* kakhulu that even caused me to leave that room, because that never use to happen in the olden days. If your wife came to visit you, there was an area on the other side for women, it was called area 14. You were registered at the office and would get a room with your wife in that area or you would go by the doctor's place [this is where men could rent a room in the Township]. But now all of that does not happen. If you come with your wife, she comes and joins us in a room where there are only men. You wake up and go to work and you leave your wife with other men. Even in these new houses, it's still almost the same as there is only one door [one unit] and three bedrooms. We share the dining room, toilets and the kitchen with this woman or women who are from the rural areas. There is no freedom for us (Focus Group Discussion, 09 March 2009).

It is clear that this [process has caused much pain and a loss of respect, that safety and security is compromised, and that hostel dwellers' rights have been violated. The participants noted that they do not trust the women who live at the hostels, or their fellow males. The following sets of quotes show how I understand the hostel as spaces of perplexity using comments about the household.

I started dating this man in 1979. I started visiting here in 1982 as my first child was born in 1983 and started living here permanently in 1988. I live with my husband here at the hostel. I have three children. One of them lives in the village and two of them live with me here at the hostel. The one who live is in the village is the oldest; she takes care of the home and keeps on making babies while she is not married. She visits us sometimes, like now she is with us for these days. We have a good relationship with her although I have a problem with what she is doing. The problem is that one cannot throw away her children no matter how bad they are. ... Since I started living here, I have never lived outside the hostel except when I am visiting my village. I came to live here through Mr Luthuli who was then my boyfriend and is my husband now. I do not see myself leaving the hostel now. The only problem is that there is nobody in the village and I am the owner of the home. Although whether that

home gets finished or not does not make a big difference to me as I spend most of my time here at the hostel (Interview with Mrs Hlengiwe Luthuli, 26 March 2009).

The above quotation represents views which contradict those of the majority of men (and sometimes women) in terms of the importance of the presence of a woman in the homestead.

Participant 1: Most of the women here close down their households in the rural areas since they are the heads in the absence of men (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 2: Some women have bad intentions about the relationships they have with men. After having broken up with some man in the rural areas, she would make sure that the next person she has a relationship with, she never lose him for any reason. She would go to traditional doctors for *muti* (traditional medicine). This *muti* should prevent you from even thinking about your family in the village. Women should not be doing this thing as it is wrong. It is a man who knows where the future of a woman is. He is the one who proposes anyway (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

The views of participant 2 show feelings of suspicion and distrust and reveal the shifting power relations between men and women. Many men are not happy with living with women at the hostel, including those who actually live with women, whether wives or girlfriends.

Participant 3: Women here are irresponsible. There are female things [sanitary towels/pads] that should not be seen by men, but in this place, the women throw these things anywhere. This is really unbearable. We even find these things in the bathrooms and it is so disgusting. I personally grew up at home with 10 girls, four from my mother and six from my uncle. I have never seen any of their panties or any other private women's things. The government can help us with workshops that will explain and educate the women about things that can be flushed and things that cannot be flushed in the toilet. It is the same case with men (condom usage) (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

This was a big issue for the men, with everybody wanted to express an opinion. Used sanitary towels/pads; babies' diapers and condoms are found all over the place from a bin without a lid, to an illegal dumping site, in bathrooms, to wherever there is a burst sewerage tank.

The next quotes will show how I understand the hostel as spaces of perplexity using comments from the hostel dwellers about gender.

Participant 1: There are not only advantages but disadvantages as well for having women in the hostel. The good thing about it is that, men use to quarrel (*badelelane*) and then fight (*bese beyolwa izimpi*). Women are able to somehow weaken men, discourage them from having fights. Even if there is a man who always wants to start a fight, other men can go to his partner and ask her to ask him to behave himself. It is known that the man can listen to a woman when she tells him to stop it. The impact

of the presence of a woman in a man's life is really big [in both positive and negative sense] (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 2: The thing with women here is that one does not have to pay *lobolo* for them [which would probably be favoured by younger men than women of all ages as well as older men]. One can just live with them and enjoy all the benefits that married men enjoy, women will live with you without you paying a cent to their families, and they will wash, clean and iron for you, whereas in the villages, men have to pay *lobolo* if they want access to a woman. So, for people who did not get a chance to find a wife in the villages, they have one here. What she will want is money every day before you go to work, it can be money for tomatoes, for potatoes, for cosmetics or anything else that she needs. If I get tired of that one, I leave her and get another one. The forgetting or neglecting of a home is caused by freebies, things that one does not pay for (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

While there is no shame associated with 'leaving' a person you cohabited with without being married, leaving your wife, somebody you paid *lobolo* for, there is a lot to lose, including 'umfazi' (the wife); *ama-lobolo* and your dignity and respect as a man.

Participant 3: Another reason for men to neglect their homes is if they do not get the love and respect that they want [from their wives and children]. For example a man will find another partner here and find that she treats him way much more than the one who is at the village treats him. This man would more likely to stay with the one who gives him respect (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Most men argued that the kind of respect they get from women who come from the rural areas is the best. They claimed that some women in the urban areas would give them a lot of respect at first, in order to make the man forget about his partner in the rural area, but the minute he commits himself to the new partner, she would change to her real self.

What one considers good or bad would mainly depend on the gender and age of the person, since the participants are primarily from the rural areas. On the other hand, this is about the choices that individuals make as well as the meanings they attach to the different things they do, i.e. to *kipita*⁵ or not to *kipita*; to forsake a rural home or not to.

Although this hostel is different from the Umlazi hostels, whereby women are not allowed to put on trousers and there is a court case currently going on because of a woman who was abused because she was found wearing trousers, she was beaten and stripped off the pant. Those hostel dwellers are still adamant that a woman should not wear trousers. It is different at the KwaMashu hostel, as you drive around you can see them wearing trousers. It's good that we are talking about this issue during the sixteen days of activism against women and children abuse. Just recently I found out that

⁵ To live as husband and wife while you are not married and *lobolo* has not been paid (co-habit).

although there are lots of women at the hostel, they are only allowed to do their washing [laundry] from Mondays to Fridays. They are not allowed to wash during the weekends; it is only men who have the right to do washing. So the question is: if there is a woman who works full time, how will she be able to do her washing? Should she abscond from work one of the days so she can come back to do washing? So what I mean is that there is a tendency for men to look down upon women and take them as subjects... up until this point women abuse is prevalent at the hostel and they are being alienated against. Although there are lots of men living there illegally but they have all the rights to use all the facilities like those who are legally there, [unlike the women who are primarily restricted because they don't belong there] (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

The ANC ward councillor echoes Ramphela (1993:59)'s observation that, "[w]omen workers have logistical problems in getting ready for work, because of lack of privacy. In some hostels, only men are permitted to use toilets and shower in the mornings, because they are said to have a prior claim to them historically".

There is little that I can say is good about having women here. It is only good for those who live with their husbands because then they take care of their husbands. What is not nice about living with them is that they finish money. Most of the women here are working. I do not like living with women here at the hostel as it causes problems. It is bearable if they are living in a hostel but as long as I do not share a room with them (Interview with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, 12 March 2009).

There was general consensus amongst men and women that the majority of women at the hostel are not working. Men believe that since women are not working, they must be surviving through men's incomes, quickly forgetting or totally disregarding the role of the social grants in the lives of women and children.

When asked why he thinks women come to the hostel, Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo said:

Women come here to find work. It was good that they were not here during apartheid as people did not kill each other. Their presence here is a problem because one cannot say that I do not want anybody to talk to my wife. That would be impossible as other men would meet her in the common rooms like washing place, kitchen and toilets (Interview, 12 March 2009).

Participant 1: Women in this place come from all walks of life. There are those who come from the townships and those who come from rural areas. There are those who failed in their marriages and then they come here. There are those who come here for children's maintenance. Some are just looking for any man who can support them (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 2: Women are able to come to the hostel having one boyfriend. When the boyfriend goes to work, she then pays attention to another man who lives in the same house. And then that causes problems. Sometimes that causes some people to die. Another thing is women are always up for a fight. If she sees your cell phone, she takes it and goes straight to the pictures, if she finds anything interesting, then she starts with you. As it has been said, women are not the same. There are experienced and inexperienced women. Those who have the experience will use that to their benefit. For example, a woman from the rural areas, when you call her, she will come quickly, kneel in front of you and listen to what you have to say and leave. Even when you are in the bedroom, she will wait for your start, unless you have trained her otherwise, but women from here, they would come to you room for the first time, see the bed, push you into fall in it and that's it. She will do things that you only see on TV or in the magazines if you even look at those things. You easily get lost in things like that if you are not a focused person or if you did not have a partner (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 1: we [men] are the people who are oppressed (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 2: It's the male hostel citizens, the ones who are married who are oppressed. We do not have our private rooms with our wives when they visit (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

When I challenged them about the hostel formerly being only for males anyway, they argued:

Participant 1: But there was an area called 14 but now there is no 14. It was only a person with a marriage certificate who could bring a woman in here (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 2: The coming of women here anyhow finishes [takes away] our space and it finishes our manhood as well. I have not seen a situation where a person can be in a room with a woman who is not his partner and she is covered with only a curtain. There is a lot of trouble that is brought in by women (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

I asked them when women started coming to live in the hostels. One participant said (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 1: I cannot remember the year. The police officers had a hard situation when they ran around trying to chase them out of the hostels. The next thing the women complained and said that they now have children from these police officers. We were not abused when there were no black jacks, when the law was strict. Now there is no peace. And even as these new hostels are being built, they are not going to help the situation. We even left them and built our own *imijondolo* because I cannot stay with my wife along with other men in the same room. But now we are still being sent back to the same kind of house settings while they are trying to finish *imijondolo* (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

The resort to *imijondolo* is not the sole doing of women. Each focus group said that privacy is all they wanted. Government's plan for family housing is clearly not accepted by the hostel dwellers.

Participant 2: Here in the hostels, I came here in 1961. We are living in very bad conditions. It is a disgrace so much that if journalists can come here, I do not know what is it that they can see. I want to thank the citizens for the way they are handling our situation and not inviting everybody else to come and see this disgrace. Firstly, here in the hostel, there are all kinds of dirt. Secondly, people are being killed and it is not even reported in the news while we do see in other places cases like that people reported. This is directed to the government as it is in power. In the city, there were no mosquitoes but now we have to buy doom and try to address this issue. Now we are living in the bushes and use DOOM spray. I have never seen these mosquitoes before, they say they are from there but they are being hidden here eThekwini. Thirdly, the houses are old and damaged since long ago, it's the houses and the pipes are all rotten. There were no doors of the rooms and we used to use cardboards to close houses. These people are in shame, they do not have toilets, and nothing ever gets fixed. Water is getting wasted, not only because it is used but because when the pipes burst, nobody fixes them. Fourthly, yes we can see development and are we grateful for that but it is coming in very slowly. I and some other people are not happy with the plan of this development. It would be nice if people had a chance to say what kind of housing they would like for themselves. Houses are supposed to take different shapes and plans. There are people who do not have (rural) homes (*imuva*) having children and who do not know where to keep their children. There are also very old people who also do not have (rural) homes. In that case we do not know who can solve our problems as they government does not even come near. We have tried to call *umkhandlu* (the municipality). We as the Siyanqoba Development Committee⁶ last year in November did call Mr Ngubane⁷ and Mr Phakathi⁸. We pulled Mr Phakathi with our own hands so he could see the situations in the hostels and he said he had never seen something like this. Mr Ngubane ran away (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 3: As my brother has said, we do see the signs of development but we realize that it is not the kind of development that we were expecting. I have not lived very long here in the hostel. The bed that I got is so bad. I cannot even try and let somebody else sleep in that bed because it is broken and kind of divided into half. In terms of development, we were told that we were going to get houses that we were going to be happy with and also that we could live with our families. But now we realize that these houses are not what they promised. You find that these rooms have three bedrooms and a common kitchen, dining and bathroom. These bedrooms are supposed to have different people. These houses do not allow you to be free. You can't leave your wife in your room when there is another man in the next bedroom. It's easy for the man next door to know that you have left and he can go and know in your room where there is your wife and start saying things. Even if you suspect

⁶ See chapter 5 for a description of Siyanqoba Development Committee. Siyanqoba means 'we are conquering'

⁷ He works for eThekwini municipality and works closely with hostel stakeholders

⁸ He works for eThekwini municipality in the maintenance section and works closely with the hostel superintendent

something it would be difficult for you to say anything to anybody. These rooms really do not make us happy. We trusted that the situation was going to be better (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 4: The problem that we have is that of crime. We are also not happy with the houses they are building for us. It is not what they promised us. We were told that a person can live with his family. Those who would not live with their families they would stay in rooms that would satisfy them. But now we find that these bedrooms are too small and there are three different people sharing toilets and kitchens. But people are not the same, you can find that one can go to the toilet and not flush the toilet. One would go to the kitchen and not clean after preparing his meals. Until when should one be cleaning after his mates at the toilets and in the kitchens? You find that some people are stubborn, even if you tell them they would not change their ways. It is even impossible to change the people one is living with. Another problem, there are no houses suitable for disabled people. This is important as some people get disabled during the stay in the hostel. If one is on the wheel chair, how can he climb stair case? (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 5: I just want to remind my brother that there are houses which are suitable for disabled persons. I have told some of the people here. Their rooms are in doubles, they have small suitable toilets as well (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 6: I would like to talk about education. We need an education institution here at the hostels as there are many people who are not educated. If this institution can be based here it would be better (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

Participant 7: We can see this development, although it has not directly reached us, we have seen it from further away. But I feel that it came to make us fight with each other. Here we live with our children, not our biological children but the ones that we meet here at the hostel. The small space that we meet at which is the kitchen and the toilet, people will mess up those spaces and some of us always have to come and clean the mess made by other people. Some people do not like cleanliness, so our plea is that we be given our own private spaces where we can live either by ourselves or with our families (Focus Group Discussion, 04 May 2009).

The focus group discussion I conducted was with a group of men who were all living in the old hostel blocks. This group had been at the hostel for 20 years or more.

I started living here in 2007. I had initially come here to apply for the child's grant, and then I never went back. I then looked after my young school going siblings. I lived with my child as well. I dropped out from school at standard nine; I did not go back to school because my parents would not support me. They were angry with me, I am not married, have one boy child, his surname is Zulu. His father is from Eshowe and we are not together anymore. We met here at the hostel when I was visiting my mother. My mother has never lived in a hostel but she organised a room/shack for us and the children to live there while she lived in town close to where she works (Interview with Ms Nokulunga Zungu, 08 May 2009).

Ms Zungu is a 23 year old woman whose story shows that ‘visiting’ the hostel is one way of beginning the relocation process, which according to most interviewees is never consciously planned. Coming to the city/urban area/hostel to apply for a social grant is the reason some women from the rural areas cited as the reason for their first visit. This is prompted by the general lack of services in the rural compared to the urban areas. Ms Zungu added that:

The main problem facing people my age here is *ukuhlukumezeka* (abuse). There are people my age who are forced to live with their boyfriends because they do not have anybody else to look after them. Crime is also a big problem for everybody. There are people who are forced by work to leave their room early hours of the morning and by the time they get into the train station, they have already been robbed of everything they had (Interview with Ms Nokulunga Zungu, 08 May 2009).

Below is the story of a young woman who explained why she left the rural area to come live at the hostel.

Originally, I was living with my aunt (father’s sister) till I was 11 years. I was severely abused by my cousin. My aunt was living and working eThekweni, she did not know what was happening when she was not there. She really loved me. I eventually had to escape from that house. My cousin used to make me work like a slave. She made me wake up early hours of the morning, go to fetch water from the river which was far away, come back, make the fire and start cooking before I went to school. My school was also very far from home. When I came back from school, I would need to perform the same duties as in the morning. If I found the river full of people who are collecting water, I would delay, and when I got home I would get a hiding. Sometimes I would even opt for sleeping outside the house as I was too scared to get inside and get a hiding for coming back late from the river. I would leave water outside the house and see the sticks that were prepared to beat me up ... in the morning I would wake up, and see which direction she went, and then I would go and take my uniform from where it was if she did not go to that room, quickly take my uniform and went. There was *umhosha* with water that were not drinkable, I would quickly shower there and put on my uniform without any body lotion. By the time I got to school, I would be looking pale because of not using body lotion and also using salty water from *umhosha*. The day I escaped from that house, I was going to be beaten up again. There was a girl who is from the same father as mine, she had visited and she asked me to accompany her as she was leaving, I did. When I came back my cousin was not very happy, I also saw the sticks prepared, and then I decided to escape. My cousin was quite older than me as she had a child which was almost my age but younger. I went to my mother’s house, which was not very far by then. I found out that the man my mother was married to was abusing her greatly; she was also moving from that house, she went to Mkhuze. She got a job and lived there. I went to my aunt’s house with my mother’s children. After some times, my mother got back to this man and they took the children and built a house together. I could not go with them because that man did not like children that were not his (Interview with Ms Tholakele Mbambo, 19 July 2009).

Issues of gender-based violence (GBV) and abuse surface frequently in the women's stories. Young and older women escape the rural areas because of GBV and abuse, only to be abused by a new partner at the hostel.

The next sets of quotes show how I understand the hostel as spaces of perplexity using comments about intergenerational differences.

I live with three people, which makes four. But there are two additional guys which makes us six. The fourth bed was for my friend who was like a brother and he passed away. I tried to make sure that his son takes over and not any other person. He is the guy who has invited two other people. Now I regret inviting him to live with us (Interview with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, 12 March 2009).

This comment raises a couple of relevant issues; firstly, space, secondly, the bond of brotherhood that is created by living at the hostel in such close proximity, and thirdly, intergenerational issues or differences. Everything mentioned by Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo had a time and space factor. For example, it was normal for the blocks to be overcrowded, meaning with more than four people in a room designed for four people. However, in 2009, it was problematic to have six people in a block room, because people could be accommodated in either in informal settlements or in the CRUs. Secondly, as a result of the kind of relationship he had with his late roommate, Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo felt like he needed to be a father to the son of his late friend. He did exactly what the late friend would do, as was the norm.⁹

Participant 1: The problem is that here in the hostel, there are no older men that youth can learn from. A lot of them have died or left the hostel. Very few are left behind (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 2: Life has changed. In most of the families, there used to be lots of livestock, whereby a father would take his cows and pay *lobolo* for his son. But now, when you grow up, you find that there is not much family wealth available to take care of you in any way. Sometimes even if one would like to pay *lobolo*, he cannot afford to. And even if there is somebody who shows interest in a woman, the father of that woman who abuses the opportunity by charging the man something that he cannot afford to pay. Long ago, paying *lobolo* was not this expensive. We Black

⁹ This reminded me of a funeral that I attended at Nongoma. A man had passed away. He worked at Toyota. During his funeral, which was attended by his former colleagues, his relative and friend told the colleagues that they had to see what is it that they could do with the situation which was left by the deceased person. The deceased had been married and had eight children; the first born son was already out of school and looking for a job. The relative made it clear in public that they were expecting the former colleagues to source/seek job opportunities for the deceased's older son in order for him to be able to continue where his father left off in terms of heading the household. He explained that the deceased was the only employed person in the household.

people are destroying ourselves. We are charging something that we ourselves cannot afford to pay (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 3: This place is now dominated by young people (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 4: Some old people are leaving this place because they cannot stand the kind of disrespectful life being led by young people. For example, you can find that an old person is sitting in this room, and a young man comes in with his girlfriend in front of him without showing respect. The radio is another devil that came into the hostels. It makes so much noise that even people who are in the same room cannot hear each other. If you ask them to lower the volume, you would have started the trouble. He would tell you that this is not your house and that the radio is also not yours. Although there might be house rules, but the youth do not follow that. If you insist on things, he would hire people to kill you (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 5: Young men of this age are different. Once one has a girlfriend, he would refer to her as his wife, although he has not paid a cent to her family. They are both happy calling each other with names that they do not qualify for (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 6: The problem with a particular group of young men is that they do not appreciate the rural experience and knowledge already acquired instead they want to change and quickly adapt to ways that are new to them. They then say *isidala* (it is out of fashion) to do things as their fathers and forefathers. This attitude is developed and infiltrated to other young men (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 7: What I can add is that the government played huge role into these problems we have now. It spoke of rights and it did not explain the responsibilities that are attached to those rights. The ways these rights have been introduced, they came and made it sound like everything else that was done in the olden days was wrong or that it is now out of fashion. The government must go back to the people and explain properly the rights and responsibilities and the relationship it has with our cultures (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 8: It is true that one can learn a lot of things in the hostel. But charity begins at home. By the time people come to live here, they should already know the basics of life (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

Participant 9: People have really changed their way of life. At the hostel, there were cases whereby a person could keep his savings with one of the trusted elderly man and he is the one who would say when he needs all of his money to do whatever he was saving for. But today, it would be almost impossible to trust somebody with your money. People would rather see you dead than have you access your money. Somehow the world has changed (Focus Group Discussion, 05 May 2009).

There is a high rate of uncertainty, many reasons for confusion, substantial grounds for unhappiness and many levels of perplexity, all happening at the same time in the hostel. No single structure or person is to blame for the situation, but each stakeholder is almost equally

responsible for the changes which are taking place at the hostel. It is clear that “even neo-capitalism or ‘organized’ capitalism, even technocratic planners and programmers, cannot produce space with a perfectly clear understanding of cause and effect, motive and implication” (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:37). Men feel that they have been stripped of their freedom, which is one of the main reasons why they preferred to live in the hostel rather than other accommodation. They feel they have been deprived of their privacy. They feel that their manhood and headship status has been stolen by the government through the rights that have been given to women and children.

Women have largely been blamed for the high rate of crime at the hostel. I asked them how they feel crime can be alleviated at the hostel:

Participant 1: It will never be sorted. The reason I say that is because here if they try to do something good for us as residents, the people would wish that that particular thing belongs to them personally. For example, two days ago, they put six taps in the showers; this morning there was no tap to be found (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 2: What is painful is that you find that it is your boyfriend who does these things, why don't you report him? [This was not directed at any particular person] (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 3: But the person who stole the taps is trying to make money. But he is doing it the wrong way (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 4: I would threaten to report my boyfriend if he would do that (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 5: He would kill you after that (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 6: If your boyfriend is not in the house very late at night or early hours of the morning, you have a right to ask him where he comes from upon his return (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 7: What if he promises to kill you? (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 8: If you sit down with him and talk to him politely, he will not threaten you (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 9: What if he asks you how is he supposed to support you if he does not have money? (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 10: I would tell him to look after the children and I will go and work (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 11: What of you do not find work? (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 12: I think he would have to sell anything in order to support us and not do crime (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 13: What if he does prostitution? (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 14: It's better than doing crime (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

As so many negative things had been said by men about women at the hostel, I ask a group of women what they felt were the disadvantages of having women in the hostels:

Participant 1: Men normally complain about women [us] saying they [we] talk too much. They also say that women [we] like to put their [our] own rules and regulations on how to do things around the hostel (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 2: Another problem is that, let's say I am getting ready to go work a night shift, we all share the same showers, and we have to wait for each other in order to use the showers. If I come in first, men would have to wait till I finish before they can use a shower and if they get in first, I have to wait till they finish before I can go in. What happens is that, when you come in, you knock to check if there is anybody inside, if a man hears that it is a woman knocking at the door, he can take even two hours, not caring about the woman waiting. But if a man knocks, the other man is able to get out quickly so that the other man gets in and showers. What happens sometimes is that after waiting for a while outside the shower as one man is having a shower; another man comes in, knocks and quickly gets in before you, even if you had been waiting for a long time. Sometimes he would say he would only take two minutes. In that case, you as a woman would not have nothing to say, because anyway **this is their place**. Sometimes you even get late for work (own emphasis) (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009) (own emphasis).

Participant 3: On the same note, when a woman is taking a shower, a man would come in and peep at her. Every time a man would do the same thing (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 4: The problem with women is that most of the time we are not coming from the same area, I did not even know the hostel; I got to know it through the father of my children. Some people also got to know the hostels through different reasons and situations. Some women come to live here in the hostels and act like they are our parents, they want to own us and give us their own rules and regulations. These are the very old women who should be in their houses/homes by now because of their age. They now act like the hostels are their houses, they make us feel uncomfortable. Because of being older and also having lived in the hostels for a very long time, they now think they rule, they tempt us to answer back in a disrespectful manner. Women really have a problem, especially if one is an *umfelokazi* (widow). Woe unto her! (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

I asked if they thought this was mainly the case with women whose partners had died:

Participant 1: No, it does not only happen with women who have lost their partners; it happens with all of us (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 2: This also happens with everybody else, especially if you are new and you do not have a boyfriend (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 3: I think this mostly happens with people who have lost their partners; everybody gets curious about the future of your life. We get a lot of abuse. Even if we greet or get greeted by someone's man, that is already a problem. People will pay attention to what you are talking about. One is not even allowed to have a chat with men younger than her, once you are seen talking to a young guy, people would say "*uklebe ubamba amatshwele*" (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 4: The main reason women fight so much at the hostel is men (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 5: They think we are all here for men (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 6: Women are too authoritative and they do that at a hostel, a place originally for men and that is a problem. Women try to own a lot of things that do not really belong to them, especially those that have been here for a long time (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

Participant 7: I personally wish that the Lord helps me, when I see that the stage of having my own house has arrived, that I leave this place in peace and go to live in my house because here women talk even when there is no need. And even the young girls like to take the side of the older women and also tend to talk too much. These girls would talk negatively about you even when you are not far away from them, sometimes they do not see that you can hear them whispering about you. That is disgusting (Focus Group Discussion, 08 May 2009).

The women's views sadly and interestingly re-iterated the men's views presented above. Space and privacy and the lack thereof, are as much problems for women as they are for men.

Participant 3 above used the phrase "*uklebe ubamba amatshwele*"; this is sometimes expressed as "chicken murder". It is generally used to express the wrongness of an older woman being involved with a younger guy, as opposed to the phrase 'sugar daddy'. While 'sugar daddy' refers to a man who is about the same age as her father, when there is a 'chicken murder', the woman does not have to be as old as the guy's father, only a year or two older. It is important to note that it is mostly women who use the "*uklebe*" and the "chicken murder" phrase to and/or about each other. The word "murder" basically means the person is a criminal and the chicken implies an innocent creature. This shows how harsh and

negative the relations between women can be, especially when there is a man involved. On the other hand, where men are older than their partners/women, this is accepted as normal. If a man is between one to ten years older than a woman, that is okay. If the age gap is so big that the man could be the girl's father, then less derogatory terms are used to describe that kind of a relationship, i.e. 'sugar daddy' or *ikhehla libamba ingane* meaning an (or a very) old man is involved with a child.

Overall, I tried to organise the quotes according to the themes of 'hostels, gender, household, intergenerational conflict, etc.', but it is not always possible to divide these themes so neatly because they are intricately connected with one another. For example, when I asked men to talk about their living conditions, they started talking to me about the unwanted presence of women at the hostel. When I asked men to talk about the presence of women at the hostel, they started talking to me about their loss of power, rights and identity as well as the forsaken homesteads in the rural areas. When I asked men to talk about the CRUs, they started talking to me about how much better the apartheid times were due to many reasons. This illustrates the interesting dynamics in the way hostel dwellers see and understand their own lives, how they carry their history with them and how resistant and sceptical they are with regards to the changes that are taking place. At first glance, they appear to be playing along, but when one digs deeper, one realises that they are not totally happy. Ramphele (1993) observes that one would have to live in a hostel in order to really understand the complicated nature of the lives of the hostel dwellers.

1.2 Key Concepts

As a result of such deeply and intricately interconnected and overlapping issues presented in this thesis, certain levels of perplexity are provoked by the situations presented. Concepts, phrases and terms have been confused in the process. Most importantly this can be signified by the way that I interchangeably use 'migrant workers' and 'hostel dwellers', 'hostels' (sometimes meaning blocks, sometimes meaning shacks and most of the times meaning both blocks and shacks) and 'CRUs'. While the 'hostel dweller' and the 'migrant worker' do not always have the same meaning, they are more or less on the same level when looking at the rural-urban relations at large, i.e. migrant worker implies that one is formally employed, while a hostel dweller can be coming from a rural area but not find work. I say 'formally

employed' because mostly, the informally employed do not consider themselves to be workers. In *isiZulu*, when you ask a person 'do you work?' which is '*uyasebenza?*' if s/he is informally employed, s/he would always say '*cha, angisebenzi, ngiyatoha*' which is 'no, I am not working, I am a casual/part-timer' or 'I have a casual job'. This means that one is a migrant worker if s/he has a stable/formal employment; if not s/he is somebody who is seeking employment. 'Migrant' also assumes somebody who has *imuva* (figuratively it means a rural home) while a dweller is somebody who could have *imuva* but basically lives at the hostel. It does not matter whether s/he has an urban or rural base. What seems to be the most important and common feature of a migrant worker and a hostel dweller is the space at which they currently reside. "In actuality, each of these two kinds of spaces underpins and presupposes the other" (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:14).

While historically being a migrant worker translated into being a hostel dweller, the hostel, although now called CRUs is primarily still used to serve the function of the old-time hostel. High unemployment rates mean that hostel dwellers are not workers, although they are migrants. However, there is fluidity between being employed and unemployed. Although one may not be employed today, one could have had a piece job two days ago and could get employed again the following week. The most important thing is that most of them are based at the hostel in search of employment opportunities. Their motive for being at the hostel is the most important thing, rather than their current situation which changes often. Furthermore, a migrant worker who lives in the hostel is a hostel dweller; the fact that s/he is working does not take away the fact that s/he is a dweller, while the fact that s/he is unemployed takes away the fact that s/he is a migrant worker. It is difficult to use these strict meanings because things happen in processes; there is multiplicity and variation. While by hostel dweller, I mean both men and women; I am conscious that the "hostel is a non-static space and is understood in terms of interconnected geometries of heteropatriarchal power negotiated through interpersonal relationships between far-flung 'homes' and the locales they inhabit" (Elder, 2003b:923). Moreover, I am aware that while I mostly refer to the 'hostel community', the hostel is not a homogenous unit. The hostel community was deeply divided, always gendered and sexualised, and was a shifting and transient, fractious group of people (*ibid.*).

Ramphela (1993:3-4) noted that the definition of hostel dwellers over the years as 'migrant workers' has created problems in relation to the delineation of legitimate shop-floor issues versus non-trade unions ones. She argued that the separation of these issues into mutually

exclusive entities was of immense strategic importance to the conception and maintenance of hostels as labour compounds. They were neither acknowledged as legitimate extensions of the working environment, nor defined as domestic space accessible to the families of those living there. Currently, while one might think that the problem has been solved by acknowledging the hostel as a CRU, I feel that this is complicated the situation even further; for all the workers, the dwellers, families, etc. This problem has been highlighted above through the voices of the hostel dwellers and specifically through one man's voice who said he thought that the hostel was their "place to rest after work, but now there is no rest".

On the same note of migrant spaces, I want to further theorise space according to Lefebvre ([1974], 1991). His conceptions of space recognise and appreciate the production process of space by people. Since both migrant worker and hostel dweller have fundamental implications for space, i.e. women's spaces, men's spaces, rural areas, urban areas, residential spaces, work spaces, hostel spaces and township spaces, it is crucial to bear in mind the movements which are made by the producers of space between and within these spaces. Lefebvre formulated a "unitary theory of space" and called it *spatiology*.

"It involves, among other things, a rapprochement between physical space (nature), mental space (formal abstractions about space), and social space (the space of human interaction). These different "fields" of space, Lefebvre says, have suffered at the hands of philosophers, scientists and social scientists, not least because they've been apprehended as separate domains. *The Production of Space* seeks to "detonate" everything to readdress the schisms and scions; Lefebvre considers fragmentation and conceptual dislocation as serving distinctly ideological ends. Separation ensures consent and perpetuates misunderstanding; or worse, it props up the status quo. By bringing these different "modalities" of space together, within a single theory, Lefebvre wants to *expose* and *decode* space, to update and expand Marx's notion of *production*" (Merrifield, 2006:104) (original emphasis).

This conceptualization is crucial for the methodologies and theories I have used to make sense of the research findings. However at this stage I wish to emphasize the part where he argued "fragmentation and conceptual dislocation as serving distinctly ideological ends. Separation ensures consent and perpetuates misunderstanding; or worse, it props up the status quo" as a substantiation for my choice to interchangeably use hostel dwellers and migrant

workers in this thesis as well as to use hostels and CRUs. Using these concepts and phrases interchangeably is my way of challenging the status quo in the hostel policy framework.

Merrifield (2006:100) continued to argue that:

“[j]ust as the mature Karl Marx never chose political economy as his vocation but rather political-economy chose him, **space** now seem to choose Lefebvre as its critical conscience; it was the state of the world, as opposed to the state of his mind, that prompted his intellectual engagement, spurred his rejigging of the Marxist historical object, of a general theory of production that hitherto unfold on the head of a pin” (my emphasis).

Using the concepts of the **production of space** and a **sense of place**¹⁰, this thesis intends to show that ‘the spatial’ is constituted by the interlocking of ‘**stretched-out**’ **social relations** (Massey, 1994). This thesis challenges the conception of space and place as bounded units. This justifies looking at the lives of the migrant workers in the urban areas as not separate from the lives they lead in the rural areas. As has been seen above, this thesis uses a lot of hostel dwellers’ stories, firstly as a way of unmasking the hostel so that the perplexity can almost be seen and understood by the people who have not lived in or visited the hostel before. It also uses their stories as a way of highlighting the on-going re-organisation of social relations as well as the on-going reproduction of segregated and **gendered spaces**. It looks at how the hostels have been reproduced, how gender roles and relations have been redefined and how places have been re-organised and how these continuously shift as they are re-made by the hostel dwellers on a daily basis. Issues of unequal power relations, identity, patriarchy and household remain crucial in the critical engagement of hostels and hostel dwellers. Keim (2009:12) defines engagement as taking people seriously, to take up responsibility in one’s public political engagement or in commissioned or policy research which may serve as an orientation for political action by non-academics. Engagement thus

¹⁰ “Instead, space and place are *both* conceived in terms of embodied practices and processes of production that are simultaneously material and discursive. From this perspective, place is most usefully understood as nodal points of connections in wider networks of socially produced space – what Massey (1994) calls an extroverted sense of place. If spatiality is conceived in terms of space-time and formed through social relations and interactions at all scales, then place can be seen as neither a bounded enclosure nor the site of meaning-making, but rather as “a subset of the interactions which constitute [social] space, a local articulation within a wider whole” (Massey, 1994:4). Places are always formed through relations with wider arenas and other places; boundaries are always socially constructed and contested; and the specificity of a place - however defined - arises from the particularity of interrelations with what lies beyond it, that come into conjuncture in specific ways” (Hart, 2006:995).

means to stay closer to social realities rather than abstract general sociological assumptions and to be willing to do justice to ordinary people in one's sociological work.

Hostels in the post-apartheid South Africa immediately bring to mind the issues of history and geography, the **migrant labour system**, **rural-urban interconnections** and housing¹¹. Poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, **sexuality**, crime, and overcrowding leading to lack of privacy are interrelated issues which cannot be divorced from the 'hostel question'. Many inequalities, imbalances and injustices were created by the pre-apartheid government and harshly exacerbated by the apartheid government. These continue to pose significant challenges to the current democratic government. For the purposes of this thesis I refer to hostels in close relation to the **informal settlements**¹². The primary reason for that is, in areas like KwaMashu which has one of the biggest hostels in Durban¹³; informal settlements have been fully integrated by the dwellers into the hostels (Injobo Nebandla, 2005).

Secondly, most of the people who live in the informal settlements are, like the hostel dwellers, migrants from the rural areas. Hostels and informal settlements are continuously used as an entry point to urban life (Minnaar, 1993). Adler (1992), Kok, *et al*, (2003) and Hunter (2006) argued that it is not only migrants who are to be found in the informal settlements. The research findings of this study have also shown that a small number of hostel dwellers and informal settlers are from the townships. Thirdly, both these groups are primarily poorly educated, unskilled labourers who mainly live in overcrowded, complex and stretched-out social spaces (Massey, 1994) and highly **gendered spaces** with high rates of unemployment, HIV/AIDS, crime, etc. (see Hunter, 2006).

Fourthly, hostels and "informal settlements have long been part of South Africa's divided landscape" and the reason why they are so important today is "because of the way they

¹¹ Housing is defined as a variety of processes through which habitable, stable and sustainable public and private residential environments are created for viable households and communities. This recognises that the environment within which a house is situated is as important as the house itself in satisfying the needs and requirements of the occupants. Accessed on 04 November 2009 from <http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1994/housing.htm#4.2> A New Housing Policy and Strategy for South Africa 1994

¹² The term 'informal settlement' rooted in the language of planners can serve to homogenise what is a diverse spatial landscape (Hunter, 2006:156). *Imijondolo*, ghettos shacks, shanties, squatter camps and slums are some of the phrases used interchangeably with informal settlements and I believe this on its own begins to show the diversity represented by the informal settlements.

¹³ "One of the features of the Durban hostels, not found elsewhere, is the accommodation provided for visiting wives.... But, of course there is no room for the wives of those men who would like them to stay longer" Wilson, 1972:55.

capture important recent economic and demographic changes” (Hunter, 2006:148). Fifthly and perhaps most importantly, both the **informal settlements** and the **hostels** are indirectly in the top three of the Department of Housing’s key priority areas which need an urgent total revamp. As Ramphela did more than a decade and a half ago, I want to argue that hostels should be seen in context of the country-wide crisis in housing, which is why I align them to the informal settlements, although discrepancies do exist. This thesis also acknowledges the differences that exist in terms of the meaning attached to what informal settlements are for different people in different locations and at different times.

Furthermore, the making of **livelihoods** seems to be an important aspect of the migrants’ lives. The role played by formal employment (**labour**), **land** and **livestock** seems to be on the decline according to the migrant workers’ experiences. South Africa has an unemployment rate of approximately 40% in terms of the expanded definition. Many of those who are employed occupy insecure and informal positions. It is important to note that employment was and still is the primary reason men move to urban hostels. The use of land and livestock in the rural areas as a livelihood strategy was part of the mission of *abafazi* (wives) to make a homestead. The **power** and **identity** of migrant workers both in the rural and urban areas, and in the private and public spheres was composed of land worked by women (and children), livestock taken care of by women (and children) as well as the presence of children born and bred by women based in the rural areas. As a result of the decline of waged labour, land and livestock, the **power** and **identity** of the migrant workers is also being questioned. This can be substantiated by the fact that the South African **labour market** has seen a sharp increase in the participation of women, although the kind of jobs they do mostly fall under what is called the secondary segment of the market. However this allows for their roles at home, in the community and at the workplace to be adjusted accordingly. This adjustment restructures the household dynamics which means a change in **household heads, structures, relations and sizes**. “Terms of everyday discourse serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces and in general to describe social space. They correspond to a specific use of that space, and hence to a general spatial practice that they express and constitute” (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:16).

1.3 Contribution of the Thesis

This thesis aims to contribute to at least three sets of bodies of literature; firstly hostels, secondly livelihoods and labour studies and thirdly gender, space and place literature. For the first set of literature, I argue that hostels are spaces of perplexity and that every aspect of the hostel dwellers' lives contributes to this perplexity. I show that not only forces from inside the hostel but from outside as well (i.e. government) contribute to and shape the perplexity. For the second set of literature, I show how migrants continue to make a living in their rural-urban connections regardless of the precariousness of work and diminishing livelihoods at both ends. I emphasise the importance of moving beyond the shop-floor, investigating the lives of migrant workers and the meanings attached to their lives and relations. I argue that relying on labour studies and waged labour only is limiting and does not do justice to the everyday livelihoods struggles of the hostel dwellers. For the third set of literature, I argue that people are producing space, re-working their lives and making their histories in conditions not of their own making. I show that while the hostel has always been a spatially gendered space, its genderedness is now spatially intertwined.

The key argument of this thesis is that in the post-apartheid era, the KwaMashu hostel has become a space of perplexity that is sharply at odds with official schemes and dreams embodied in government-introduced CRUs. The cultural formations approach helps us to understand why and how this is so by looking at (i) gender and sexuality as centrally important constitutive forces; (ii) on-going rural-urban connections in the context a collapse of livelihood at both ends and (iii) how social grants continue to make a mark in these conditions. The cultural formations approach assists us to see how and why the CRUs are perplexing in almost every aspect of the hostel dwellers' lives. I closely examine gender, generational and employment/unemployment status to show how *inhlonipho* (respect) has been 'lost' and how some of the government-imposed programmes (e.g. CRUs and social grants) play a fundamental role in these changes. These factors (gender, generational and employment/unemployment) are the central categories that determine one's roles and responsibilities as an individual within a collective i.e. family and or community.

The voices of the migrants help provide an enhanced version of what the hostel currently is and how it functions, not according to the planners and rulers but directly from the dwellers' perspective. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the hostel space in many ways that are

constantly changing and being contested, resulting in them being perplexed spaces. It looks at the hostel as a bed-hold (see Ramphela, 1993), hostels as interconnected, sexualised and gendered spaces (see Elder, 2003a; 2003b), hostels as sites of resistance, (*ibid.*) hostels as a temporary accommodation (see pre- and apartheid legislation¹⁴, i.e. Bantu Urban Areas Act no. 25 of 1945; Mines and Works Act no. 12 of 1911 and as amended in 1926; Group Areas Act no. 41 of 1950; Pass Laws Act of 1952; Bantu Education Act no. 47 of 1953), hostels as single-sex accommodation (*ibid.*), hostels as a home (see current government's housing policy), hostels as a holiday resort (views of migrant dwellers with regards to their family members temporarily visiting), hostels as a community, and hostels as a place of displaced people (see current government policy on hostels). Some of the changes that we have seen include hostels being upgraded or refurbished from hostels to flats, from dormitories to self-contained units, from single-storey to double-storeys, in some cases from multi-storeys to single-storeys and double-storeys, from single sex accommodation to multiple sex accommodation, from workers' residence to family housing, including children, and students "from hostels to homes" (see the Social Housing Foundation, 2005; Byerley, 2005). "Spaces under transformation" and "hostels as sites of resistance" seem to be the best way of conveying the changes taking place in hostels (Elder, 2003a).

This thesis is primarily in conversation with the hostel literature in South Africa. This is a richly researched subject, especially during the prime stages of the apartheid regime (1970s and 1980s) through to the early days of democracy (see Sitas, 1983; 1996; Ramphela, 1993; Minnar, 1993; Zulu, 1993; Moodie, 1994; Elder, 2003a; 2003b; Ngcongco, 2006; Erasibo, 2008; for the migrant labour system, see Wilson, 1972; Rex, 1974; Murray, 1981; Delius, 1990; Bozzoli, 1991; Adler, 1992; James, 1999; Ngwane, 2003; Kok *et al*, 2003; Bonner, 2009) and rural-urban connections (see Andersson, 2001; Englund, 2002; Hart and Sitas, 2004). Studying the hostels in current times is interesting because it not only brings out the idea of men at the centre of the production process and women at the centre of the reproduction process based in the rural areas, or people who have invaded men's spaces in the urban areas (hostels) but rather shows the reversal of these trends which is far from being a neat process.

¹⁴ Some of these are directly and some are indirectly related to the hostels and the hostel dwellers. In total, they translated in Black people being foreigners in the cities, no education or low education, un- or semi-skilled, etc.

Glen Elder's 2003 book, *Hostels, sexuality and the apartheid legacy: malevolent geographies* is an exceptional later study on hostels from the mid-to-late 1990s. The year 2003, almost 10 years after democracy, was a good time to check if the government promises were at least moving in the direction of being met. Political violence had come and gone. Unemployment was at its highest levels, female migration, HIV/AIDS and the roll-out of social grants was growing fast, rural-urban migration had not stopped and people had not stopped building informal settlements. Elder perfectly located his study within rural-urban connections, South Africa's historical legacy and the geography of apartheid.

However, while Elder provides a clearly focused study of hostels based on the gendered and sexualised lives of the dwellers, I do not agree with his pessimistic interpretation that the everyday lives of the women who live at the hostels "have remained the same, or tragically worsened" (2003a:2). My findings indicate that women's movement from rural to urban areas is always positive because firstly it is out of one's choice, although under very constrained circumstances. Secondly, it presents opportunities and possibilities as well as new challenges and risks. Thirdly, social grants are making a positive difference in their lives. Women are definitely not passive participants being moulded and channelled by men and the apartheid legacy alone; they are also active agents engaging in the circumstances of their lives. They also use and abuse men (i.e. through domestic and sexual favours) and the system (i.e. through social grants) opportunistically. On the other hand, there is ample evidence of the way in which men's lives are deteriorating in the midst of high unemployment, dread diseases like HIV/AIDS, and Tuberculosis (TB), and a decline in rural livelihoods procurement. Men have lost their space, freedom, privacy, employment, livestock, land, respect and dignity. Hostel men's lives have worsened as well.

While I have noted a number of interesting on-going features and trends in some of the hostel studies mentioned, I have also noted some limitations. For example, Ramphele's 1993 study discusses hostels in Cape Town and their occupants, but fails to examine the intricate connections that the hostel dwellers lives have with the rural areas. Although she hints at the fact that her participants have some form of rural background, she does not show how their rural backgrounds are part of their everyday. My study differs from hers in the geographical sense (she did hers in Cape Town and I did mine in KwaZulu-Natal); in the fact that her work is based in more than one hostel (Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu hostels), while mine is based on one hostel (KwaMashu). It is also not just about the time factor (the apartheid vs. the

democratic era), or the fact that I not only did research in the hostel but traced the larger rural-urban connections. The major difference comes from the fact that I lived in the hostels for a full period of nine months¹⁵, which was the second phase of my fieldwork. I also visited four rural areas in northern KZN¹⁶ linked to the KwaMashu hostel and spent a minimum of one full week in each location (Nongoma, Hlabisa, eShowe and eMpangeni) followed by a couple of days' visits as needed. "To capture the essence of current social interaction in the hostels, one would have to live there for a period of time and observe interaction over 24-hour periods," (Ramphela, 1993:58). However, the author felt that "space constraints of this setting preclude this form of study" (*ibid.*). In addition to being a researcher, Ramphela also presented herself as an empowerment agent, facilitating empowerment programmes which further imbued her with power over the participants.

It is from Ari Sitas (1983) who did his PhD on 'African worker responses on the East Rand' and wrote an article in 1996 titled 'The new tribalism- hostels and violence' in response to the hostel violence from the late 1980s till 1995/6 which spread to almost every hostel in South Africa that I have adopted the 'cultural formations' approach. I use this to show how and when the ideas of *ukuhlonipha* gain and lose meaning for different people at different times. Sitas (2010; 2004; 1996; 1992; 1983) has been able to discuss the issues facing African workers beyond the shopfloor. His work has been integral in the way that it lays the foundation for any study to be conducted on workers at the hostels. The eight chapters of his PhD take us through the different aspects of the workers' lives i.e. the state, trade unions, workplace transformation, using the cultural formations approach. When using the cultural formations approach,

"The emphasis is on the content of activities, of the 'way of life' of what workers do though adds no explanatory power to the term 'culture'. What is important to argue is that culture is also about form not only content. If one were to talk about 'culture' it is not so much what people do, but more importantly the form the activities take. It is not that a worker sings or drinks, it is the way he or she sings or drinks; it is not that he works, but the way he works. Culture is about forms of social behaviour. It itself therefore enjoys a degree of autonomy and is thus a formative process, irreducible on

¹⁵ I have to acknowledge that my stay at the hostel was made easier by the Community Residential Units. I lived in a CRU which was safer and had more basic needs.

¹⁶ The significance of these areas is the crossing of the Thukela River, which formerly divided the British colony of Natal from the independent Zulu kingdom. This is so significant that all the migrants who come from across this river refer to themselves as *umkhaya* (homeboy/homegirl).

the one hand, yet related on the other, to the economic structures of the society. How then is this irreducibility conceptualised? ” Cultural formations in working class life arise out of a variety of worker associations and combinations. These, usually defensive combinations are the sources of the nexus of rules and regulations defining, prescribing and shaping social interaction. So any reference to working class culture is always defined on two axes: (a) by the limits a social formation sets on its working population under a determinate system of production. (b) by the historically specific creation of a mass of wage labourers. Whilst the latter process brings working people together that defensively form associations amongst them, the former creates the parameters of their functioning” (Sitas, 1983: 39-40) (original emphasis).

However, a major weakness of Sitas’s work is its failure to capture and theoretically explain the gender dynamics at play in the hostels and sometimes in the work spaces of the migrant workers.

In current times, there have been many connecting strands between scholars who do work on labour; livelihoods, gender and sexuality, and I have chosen to use the work of scholars who understand the critical role of space and place in the production of meanings and identities both in the community and in the workplace. I largely rely on work of Hunter, 2010; 2006; 2005a; 2005b; 2004a; 2004b; 2002; Bozzoli, 1991; 1983; Bonnin, 1996; 1997; 2000; 2007; Mosoetsa, 2005; 2011; Elder, 2003a; 2003b in order to make my case about labour and livelihoods in South Africa and specifically in KwaZulu-Natal. I closely use South African labour studies literature (Sitas, 2010; Barchiesi, 2011; Celik, 2010; Mosoetsa, 2005; 2011; Webster and von Holdt, 2005; von Holdt, 2003; Webster, 1985; Bhengu, 2006; Buhlungu, 2006; 2010; forthcoming) to try and make sense of the current South African labour market, linking it back to the on-going labour migrant system.

The methodological, theoretical and conceptual frameworks highlighted above, show that my study provides an enhanced analysis on hostels and the connections they have with the rural areas. This study not only acknowledges and highlights the links the hostels have with the rural areas; it deeply engages with these links and the processes involved. This study should be seen as responding to and engaging with Elder’s core interest in the intricate and intertwined role of sexuality and gender in the hostels and hostel violence. It also responds to the challenge posed by Hart and Sitas of moving beyond rural-urban disconnections or

dichotomies and seeing land, labour and livelihoods as knitted into each other. This study responds to both Elder's and Hart and Sitas's challenge by problematising the issue of the hostel question. Chapter by chapter, it then examines the different levels of perplexity and explains how they work in and through one another to produce spaces of perplexity.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

The current chapter introduced the study and its core arguments. It introduced the different levels that are important in trying to understanding the whole. Each chapter that follows unpacks these levels.

Chapter Two presents conceptual and theoretical frameworks that have informed the research methodologies chosen and goes on to specify the research methods utilised in collecting data for this study. It lays the foundation of the process of conducting the study both theoretically and methodologically. Just as "Lefebvre's study... evokes another instance of his "regressive-progressive" method: going backwards, he suggests, help us go forward and onwards" (Merrifield, 2006:19). I have found the above-mentioned method extremely useful in researching as well as in presenting this thesis, i.e. I start by providing a foundation, then go back in chapter three and then move forward in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter Three takes us back in time in history through historical and geographical processes and episodes so that we can move forward to understand the present state of the hostels. It specifically explains the functioning of the hostel and the changes that have taken place up until today. It is based on the primary and secondary data. This has allowed me to expose the discrepancies between normative prescriptions and everyday practices and to trace the internal and external contradictions (Burawoy, 1998).

Chapter Four focuses on the various ways that the people who live in the hostel and in the rural areas make a living and the struggles that they endure in their everyday life processes. It moves from the broader picture of the South African labour market to talk about the specific livelihood struggles of hostel dwellers based on primary research findings. These include the role of land, livestock, labour (formal and informal forms), social assistance and reliance on

family and friends for support. This chapter captures the changing nature of income generation, livelihood-making and the decline in secure employment.

Chapter Five begins to tie together the different kinds of formations that hostel dwellers produce in addition to what the government produces for and through them. It looks at how the various types of formations across the rural-urban connections, connect, reconnect, disconnect and fragment the socially, economically, geographically and politically produced patterns of relationships.

Chapter Six reaffirms the major arguments and presents the concluding arguments. Relevant recommendations are included for researchers interested in further investigating the issues discussed in this thesis.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

2. Introduction

This chapter begins by highlighting the fundamental and principal methodological, conceptual and theoretical frameworks¹⁷ that I have utilised. Secondly, in the process of de-mystifying the issues of perplexity, I will attempt to address the conception behind what I have called the movement from dichotomization to triangulation in the lives of the migrants. I will further explain what I have called the movement from triangulation to perplexity. This section will provide examples of the everyday livelihood struggles of the hostel dwellers which depict the changes and the bafflement that have been taking place and that are in turn changing the rural-urban character as well as the definition and characteristics of the hostel. Then I will go on to unpack the three main theoretical frames namely; (i) the production of space (Lefebvre [1974] 1991); Massey, 1984; 1994; 2005; 2007), (ii) the rural-urban continuum (Lefebvre [1974] 1991); ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000); Mamdani, 1996; Tacoli, 1998, 2003), Hart and Sitas (2004) and the feminist perspective and conceptions of space which Lefebvre ([1974] 1991) and Burawoy's methods (1998) do not draw on but are vivid in the articles and books by Massey (1984; 1994; 2005; 2007), Hart (2002; 2006), and Collins, (1986; 2009). The use of multiple theories eliminates the possibility of a biased single theory (Boeije, 2010). I used a multi-sited ethnography for this study. KwaMashu hostel in the Greater eThekweni Region (eThekweni Municipality) and eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa in the Greater Zululand Region (Zululand District Municipality) are the multiple sites that I used for collecting primary data. I commuted from Inanda to KwaMashu hostel for the first six months of the fieldwork process. In the second phase of fieldwork I lived at KwaMashu hostel for nine full months. Finally, I spent at least eight

¹⁷ It is important to understand "that neither theorising nor elaboration of general frameworks can in themselves answer questions about what is happening at any particular time or in any particular place" (Massey, 1984:9). Instead, conceptual and theoretical frameworks are used as a way of guiding the analysis and discussion of the findings of the study that I have conducted in the past two to three years. Consequently the presentation of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks does not start and end in this section; it has already informed the introductory chapter and it will continue through the next four chapters of this thesis. This is because conceptual and theoretical tools cannot be divorced from the reality of the participants of this study, which explains why I see theory and practice as intricately interconnected in and through each other.

alternate weeks in the rural areas, living in the homes of the hostel dwellers from KwaMashu. Figure 2.1 depicts the research sites.

Since most of the key concepts have been defined and explained in the introductory chapter, this chapter will focus on explaining and applying the theoretical frameworks that inform this study. I will justify critical ethnographies (Hart, 2002; 2006; Burawoy, 1998) as a method and reflexivity (Burawoy, 1998) as a model that laid the presuppositions and principles for the production of knowledge contained in this thesis. This is “the method and model of social science that embraces engagement and not detachment as the road to knowledge” (Burawoy, 1998:5). Part of the aim of this thesis, in the midst of perplexity is to capture the interconnectedness not only of concepts and theories but also of the actual geographical settings and historical episodes deeply embedded in the lives of the hostel dwellers as well as their families residing in the rural areas. This study finds much relevance in “[t]he *extended case method* [which] applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from unique, to move from the ‘micro’ to the ‘macro’, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory” (original emphasis) (*ibid.*)¹⁸. “For Lefebvre, “[e]verything weighs down on the lower ‘micro’ level, on the local and localizable-in short, on the sphere of everyday life” (Merrifield, 2006:135; Lefebvre, 1974:366). It has become clear to me that everything “*depends* on this level” (Lefebvre, 1974:366) (original emphasis). Merrifield, (2006:13) asked “why else would he insist that everyday life ‘is inevitable starting point for the realization of the possible?’ All of which “doesn’t mean that the ‘micro’ level is any less significant” or necessarily reactive or reactionary.

Furthermore, the benefit of applying the extended case study method is that it liberates me from being locked into either conducting ‘community ethnography’ or ‘workplace ethnography’ or ‘family ethnography’. My primary focus on the CRUs could easily throw me into ‘community ethnography’; or, since I mostly deal with migrant workers, perhaps ‘workplace ethnography’ would sound more appropriate; or bearing in mind that I am paying special attention to families and households, ‘family ethnography’ could be used as my departure point. Adopting any of these individual ethnographies would limit my scale and

¹⁸ “Burawoy does not engage explicitly with conceptions of spatiality, still less with geography. Yet his own narrative of how this method has evolved is in fact deeply spatialized, and revolves around changing understandings of the relationship between what he calls ‘local processes’ and ‘external forces’” (Hart, 2006:995).

hence compromise my analytical potential. I understand the hostel place as an unbounded unit formed through relations and connections with dynamics at play in and from other places (Massey; 1984; 1994; 2005; 2007; Hart, 2002; 2006).

Therefore critical ethnographies and methods of relational comparison are more appropriate for this study as they reject the traditional dichotomous or even ‘triangulated’¹⁹, or hierarchical approach to life. These methods place emphasis on the “relational constructedness of things” (Massey, 2005:10). They “provide tools for reconfiguring area studies to challenge imperial visions of the world; for illuminating power-laden processes of constitution, connection, and disconnection; and for identifying slippages, openings, contradictions and possibilities for alliances... critical ethnography and relational comparison provide a crucial means for ‘advancing to the concrete’ - in the sense of concrete concepts that are adequate to the complexity with which they are seeking to grapple” (Hart, 2006:977). These methods, just like the extended case method are “able to dig beneath the socio-economic and political binaries and [are] able to discover multiple processes, interests and identities” (Burawoy, 1998:6).

2.1 From Dichotomization to Triangulation

This section attempts to problematise the taken-for-granted dichotomies and shows how it is easier to understand what is happening in the hostel as a process of moving from dichotomies to triangles or hierarchies. I will show that both dichotomies and hierarchies provide a limited view of the everyday life of migrants’ reality. Places, concepts, situations and practices which have emerged in this study as key and intricately intertwined are rural, urban, hostels, townships (i.e. Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu and to a lesser extent uMlazi), Community Residential Units (famously known as *izitezi* (double or multi-stories, or flats), geography, history, space, place, power, resistance, identity, gender, livelihoods (formal employment, informal employment, social grants), household, migrant worker, hostel dweller and development. Those which have

¹⁹ For the purposes of this thesis I use the terms ‘triangulated’ and ‘triangulation’ in direct relation to the famous dichotomous relationship existing between many aspects of our societies, i.e. male vs. female, formal vs. informal. Using these terms does not mean that I reject dichotomies in favour of them but I am trying to show that the reality is neither dichotomous nor triangulated. This means that things are not in twos or in threes, although my analysis shows that reality has vividly shifted from dichotomies to perhaps triangulation. My critical analysis and argument is that triangulation is limiting in the sense of quickly judging hierarchically the forms of dominance between the relationships and between different things. The sense to which I use ‘triangulate’ and ‘triangulation’ is **not** in the sense of cross examining or checking the data.

been traditionally seen in dichotomous relations are rural-urban; men-women; old-young; time-space; active-passive; township-hostel; migrants-residents, block-shack; space-place; history-geography; employed-unemployed; first-second economy, unorganized-organized, livelihoods-labour and land-labour. The diagrammatic depiction below shows the interesting, dramatic and continuous changes that are taking place in the KwaMashu hostel which, at face-value, have already started seriously challenging the dichotomies and embracing hierarchies.

Figure 2.1: Hostel and rural connections

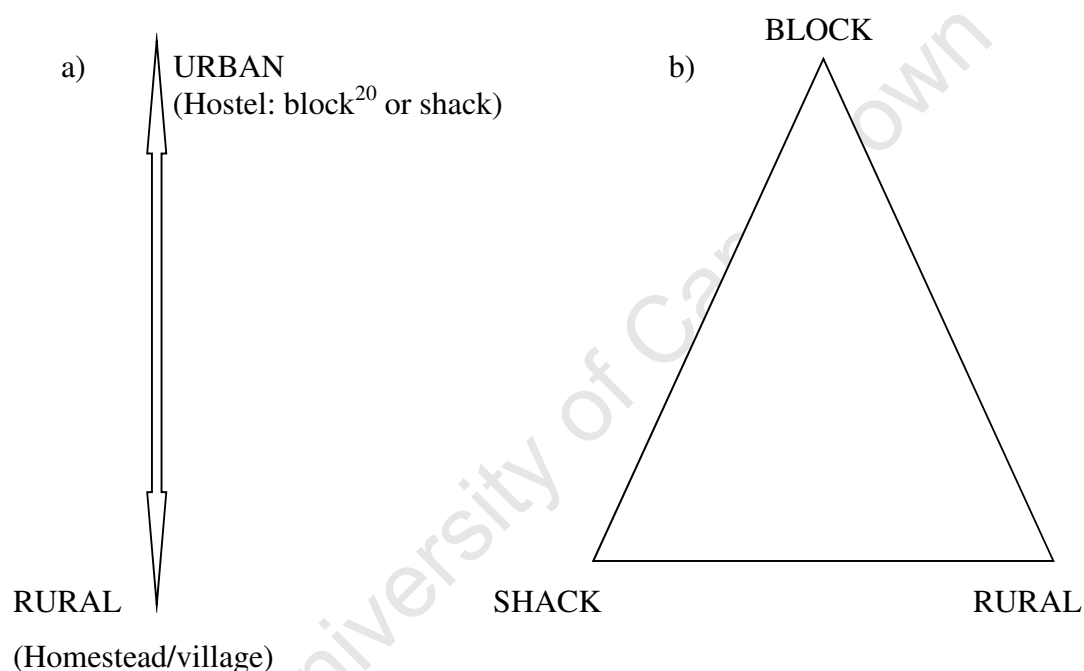


Figure 2.1(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the urban (superior) and the rural (inferior). Figure 2.1(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between the different kinds of accommodation across the rural-urban realm. It is a shift away from Figure 2.1(a). In both diagrams it is clear that the urban is seen as being on top, hence the active, and the rural below, hence passive, but the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promotes neither of the above depictions.

²⁰ Block refers to the first kind of hostel building(s) that were erected by the apartheid government between 1958 and 1960. The hostel dwellers refer to these buildings as 'blocks' because they are built in blocks and in a single-storey. In contrast, the informal settlements, which are also known as shacks or *imijondolo* are built with many different kinds of material, usually not strong enough for harsh weather conditions. Since the mid-1980s shacks have been incorporated by the dwellers at the KwaMashu hostel.

Figure 2.1(a) shows the basic understanding of the relationship between the hostels and the people who live in them and the rural areas as well as people who live in there. In one way or the other, if one is in the rural areas, s/he strives to finally get to the urban areas, through seeking employment opportunities; following a partner; seeking medical and or traditional attention, etc. Interestingly, from the urban area, the desired final destination is mostly the rural areas.

The point about depiction 2.1(b) is that the block space in the hostel is for men, while shacks are known and understood to be spaces for women. In this case, shacks are for women as much as the rural areas are where women should be residing according to the dominant patriarchal views of men at the hostel. At some stage, men moved from the rural areas straight to the block house and while women initially moved in the same way, when shacks started being established, then women moved from the rural areas into shacks. At this particular point, things have once again changed. Because of the many changes at the hostel and the negative stigma attached to it, people no longer see the hostel as a famous spot but KwaMashu Township or eThekweni in general, especially women. These views were highlighted in chapter one through the voice of Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo who said that coming to KwaMashu hostel was a famous thing in the days that he came. For more discussion on the hostel dwellings and their dynamics, please refer to chapter 3.

Figure: 2.2 Rural-urban connections

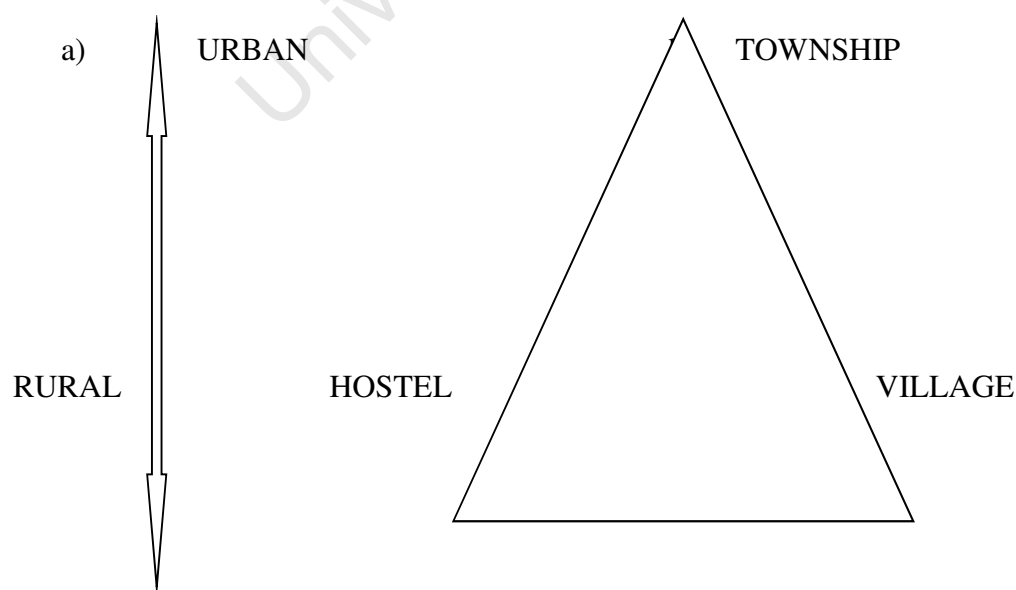


Figure 2.2(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the urban, which has always been seen as superior, and the rural, which is understood as inferior. Figure 2.2(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between the different kinds of accommodation across the rural-urban realm. Figure 2.2(b) is a shift away from the dichotomous Figure 2.2(a). In both diagrams it is clear that the urban (township) is seen as being on top, with the active and rural homestead below, hence passive, but the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promotes neither of the above depictions. Figure 2.2(b) conforms to the ideas of people from the township that people who live in the hostel are exactly the same as people in the rural areas in terms of behaviour, mannerisms and dress-code.

Unlike Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2b begins to encompass the three major residential spots for the African working population in South Africa from historical times to the present.. It is an initiative to move beyond the rural-urban as well as the township-hostel dichotomy. Townships, hostels and homesteads were just about the only three places where one could find the African working class until the relaxation of influx control as well as abolishment of the infamous Group Areas Act 41 of 1950.

What is interesting in Figure 2.2(b) is that the hostel is in the same level as the homestead. Although all Africans were at some stage forced to reside in the rural areas, the Africans living in townships for some reason believed that they were better than the hostel dwellers and people born and raised in the rural areas. People from the townships still sarcastically call hostel dwellers/people from rural areas '*omkhaya*'. This phrase is normally used by people who come from the same rural area. *Ekhaya* means at home and *umkhaya* is somebody who comes from the same area as you. When people from urban areas refer to hostel dwellers as *omkhaya* (plural of *umkhaya*), they basically mean 'farm-boy' or 'farm-girl', which does not have the same meaning that hostel dwellers or people from the rural areas attach to the term. The meaning attached to the latter is more positive. For more discussion on the hostel and its connections to the rural areas, please refer to chapter 3.

Figure: 2.3 Urban dwelling

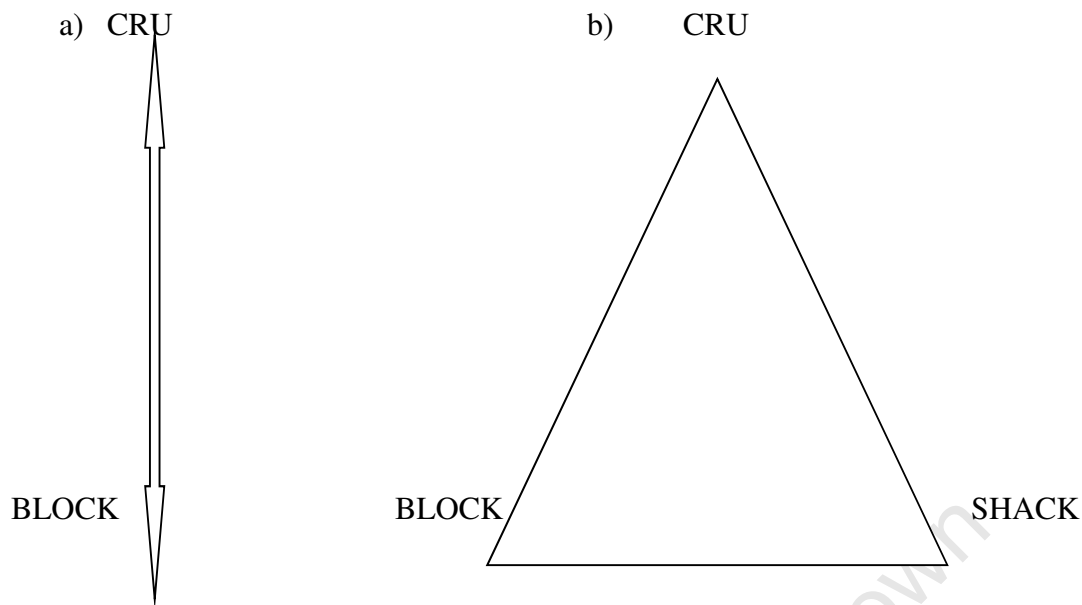


Figure 2.3(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the CRUs which have come to be seen as superior to the block houses, which are seen as inferior and old. Figure 2.3(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between the different kinds of accommodation in the urban setting. It is a shift away from Figure 2.3(a). In both diagrams it is clear that the CRUs are seen as being on top, hence active, and block houses below, hence passive, but the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promotes neither of the above depictions.

Block houses are the original structure of the hostels since their establishment in late 1950s. Shacks were established in the early to mid-1980s primarily to accommodate women moving in to the hostels. CRUs which are also known as family housing were highly debated at the beginning of the post-apartheid period and were eventually introduced in 2004 as a way of dismantling apartheid structures and hopefully their effects. Block houses are shared single storeys where four or more men lived in one bedroom with a concrete bed in each corner of the bedroom. Bathrooms and washrooms are communal and are outside of the rooms (bedrooms). Each room officially accommodated four men and had a kitchenette attached to it where cooking was done. Shacks are informal settlements built in and around the hostel.

CRUs are depicted as ideal kinds of accommodation at the hostel. They are supposed to be family housing, with each family occupying one bedroom in a unit which has between two and

four bedrooms. A unit has a shared kitchenette, shared lounge area and shared bathroom with shower, and hot and cold running water. CRUs are nicely painted and fenced.

While many writers refer to migrant workers as ‘men of two worlds’, Peskin and Spiegel (1976:19) noted that some characterise them as ‘men of four worlds’, referring to the hostels, townships, their places of work as well as their homes in the rural areas. While the latter expression is preferable to the former, since it broadens the spaces, from two to four, it is still problematic because it assumes that these four spaces are the only spaces where the lives of the migrant dwellers are lived, and that although there is more, it is bounded. I am more comfortable with Elder’s argument that “[b]y looking at the hostels as an unbounded space in terms of the meaning it has for those associated with it, we emphasise linkages with the rural areas, the township, and a myriad of other geographical nodes” (2003a:87). This shows the intricacy of the rural-urban connections as expressed in the lives of the hostel dwellers.

Figure 2.4: Gender and generational categories

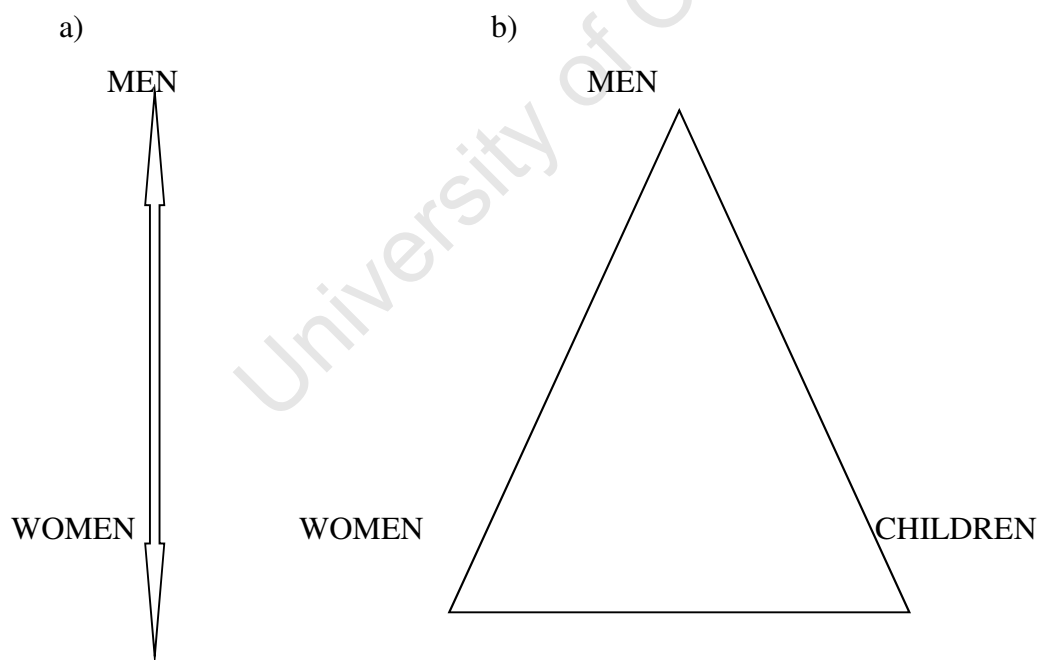
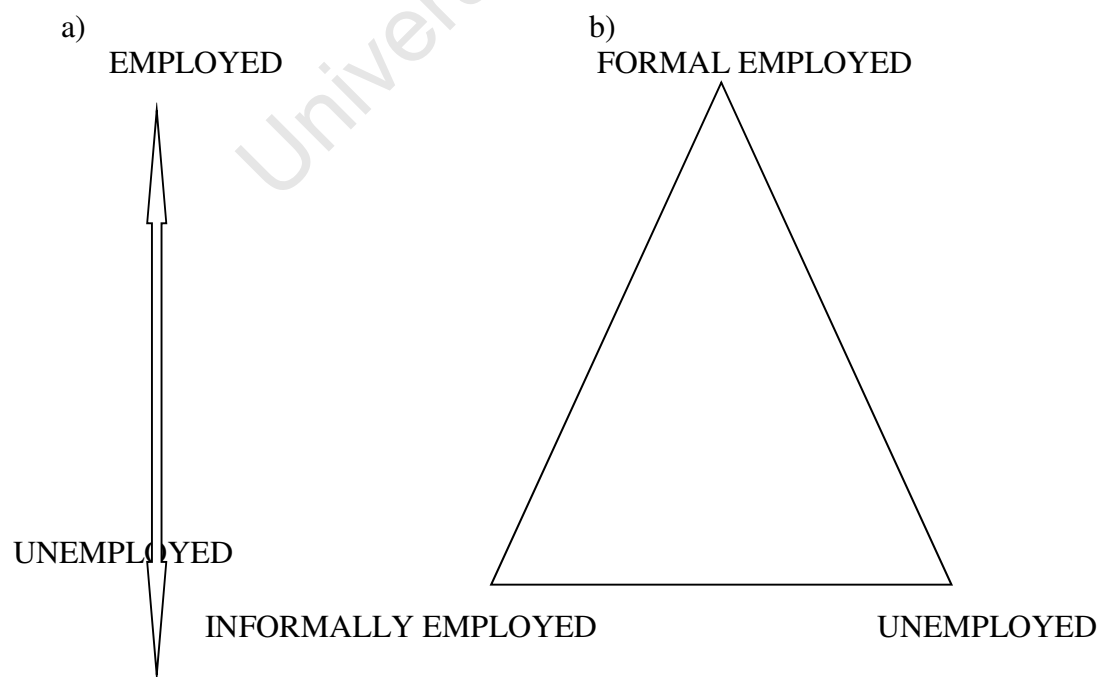


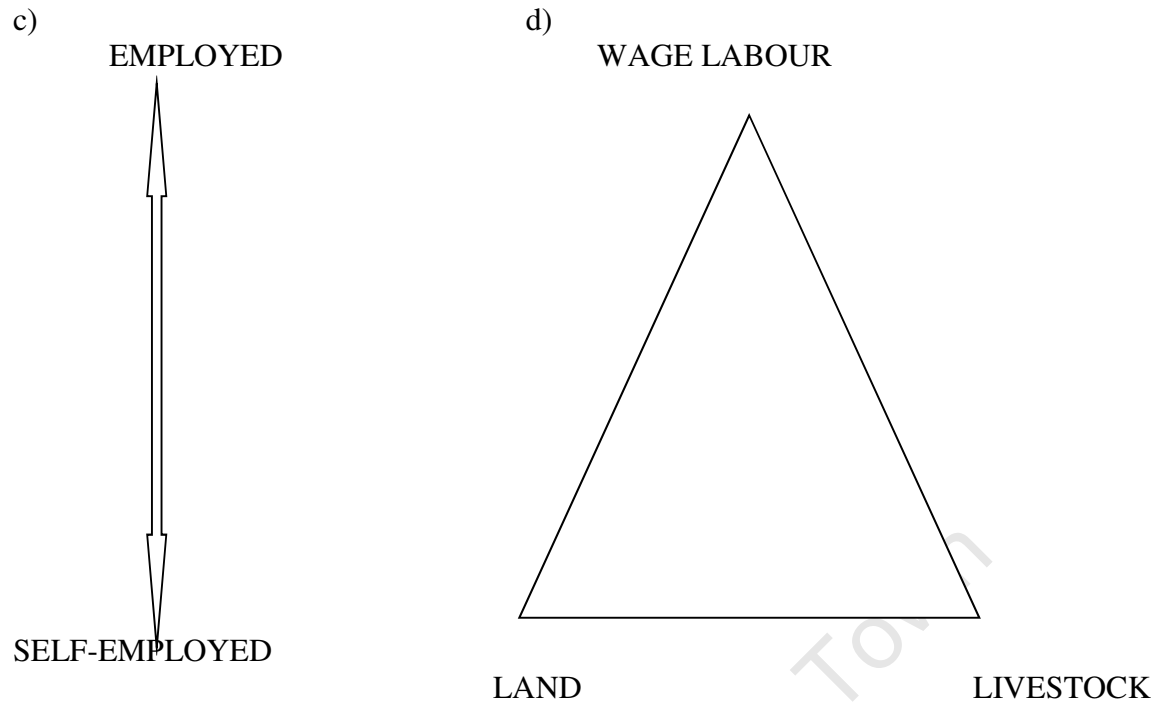
Figure 2.4(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between men (superior) and women (inferior). Figure 2.4(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between men, women and children. Figure 2.4(b) is a shift away from Figure 2.4(a). In both diagrams it is clear that men are seen as being on top and hence hold power and esteem. However the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promote neither of the above depictions.

Historically, South Africa established single sex hostels, mainly for men. Most women and children remained in the rural areas and engaged in various supplementary strategies for survival in addition to the remittances from the city from men. As has been noted, KwaMashu was one of the single sex hostels which only accommodated men. KwaMashu is said to have been a distinct hostel in Durban because it had separate ‘temporary’ accommodation for married people. ‘Temporary’ in this case means a maximum of 14 days.

According to the basic principles of the South African labour migration system, African men’s stay in the urban areas was also meant to be ‘temporary’, but this meant until the end of their employment contract. Only married women could come to the hostel to reside in the married quarters for a set period, and only after the men had made an appointment with the relevant hostel officials. However, women (and men), not being satisfied with this arrangement, started finding their own ways of coming to the hostel and residing there for a period set by themselves rather than officials. As can be expected, they became pregnant and bore children during their stay. With the arrival of children in the men-women dichotomy, women and children were and are still are placed at the same level of the triangle. For more discussion on the gender and generational relations, please refer to chapter 5.

Figure 2.5: Livelihoods





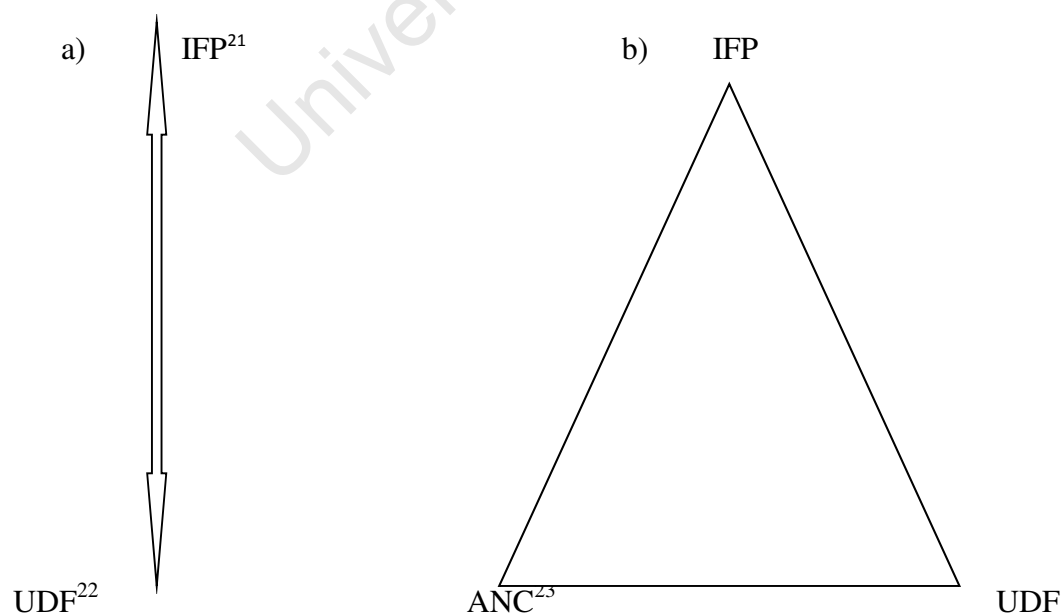
The primary feature of the South African rural-urban relationship is 'wage labour' or 'livelihoods' to be more appropriate. Historically, 'work' would have been the more appropriate term to use or more correctly, the 'migrant labour system'. An examination of labour migration and rural-urban migration specifically raises uncertainty as to whether it is still a 'system' because according to my interpretation, there is nothing systematic. Part of the intention of the following chapters is to show the changes that have taken place which have altered the nature of the rural-urban character.

Figure 2.5(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the (formally) employed which have always been seen as superior and powerful to the unemployed who are understood as inferior. Figure 2.5(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between formal employment, informal employment and unemployment. It is a shift away from Figure 2.5(a). Informal employment is used as a way of curbing the negative effects of unemployment. In both diagrams it is clear that the (formally) employed are seen as being on top and the most successful but the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promotes neither of the above depictions.

The triangulated form of relationship is interesting because it has brought into the picture what can be understood to a large extent as a ‘grey area’. Informal employment is equated with being unemployed, not only by the formally employed but also by the informally employed, as was revealed by the comments of the hostel dwellers captured in chapter one. Although informal employment has numerous negative features, i.e. no form of security and bad working conditions, it is not totally negative because it has become a major way for women, particularly middle-aged women mainly from the rural areas to earn a living, and it makes a huge difference to their households.

Figure 2.5(c) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the (formally) employed and the self-employed. Figure 2.5(d) shows the relationship between wage labour, which is mainly based in the urban areas and land and livestock which is mainly used in the rural areas. This shows that wage labour is seen as more secure than land and livestock, not only because the latter is located in the rural areas and because of a lack of human capital in these areas to look after land and livestock, but also because of unfavourable weather conditions and livestock theft. It is important to understand that all of the above diagrams do not imply that people are really stuck in these categories but are multiplying and diversifying their livelihoods accordingly. For more discussion on livelihood strategies and struggles, please refer to chapter 4.

Figure: 2.6.1 Politics in the 1980s and 1990s



²¹ Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was established in 1975.

²² United Democratic Front (UDF) was established in 1983.

Figure 2.6.1(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) which was seen by hostel dwellers as superior to the United Democratic Front (UDF) at that time in the KwaMashu hostel. Figure 2.6.1(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between the IFP, the African National Congress (ANC) and the UDF. Figure 2.6.1(b) is a shift away from Figure 2.6.1(a). The ANC was banned from 1960 to 1990 and the UDF emerged as a strong anti-apartheid movement which was formed by numerous local, regional, and national, Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This was the case in the greater Zululand areas as well, where the majority of the KwaMashu hostel dwellers come from. In both diagrams it is clear that the IFP is on top and hence the most successful and powerful but the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings promotes neither of the above depictions, especially given the role that the ANC has always played in the country regardless of the banning.

Figure: 2.6.2 Politics in late 2008

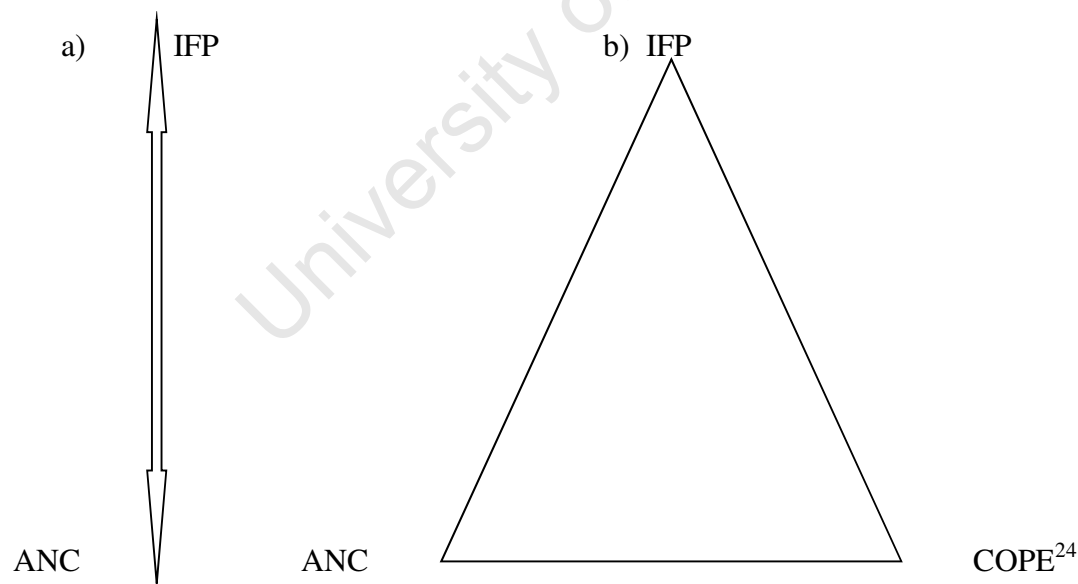


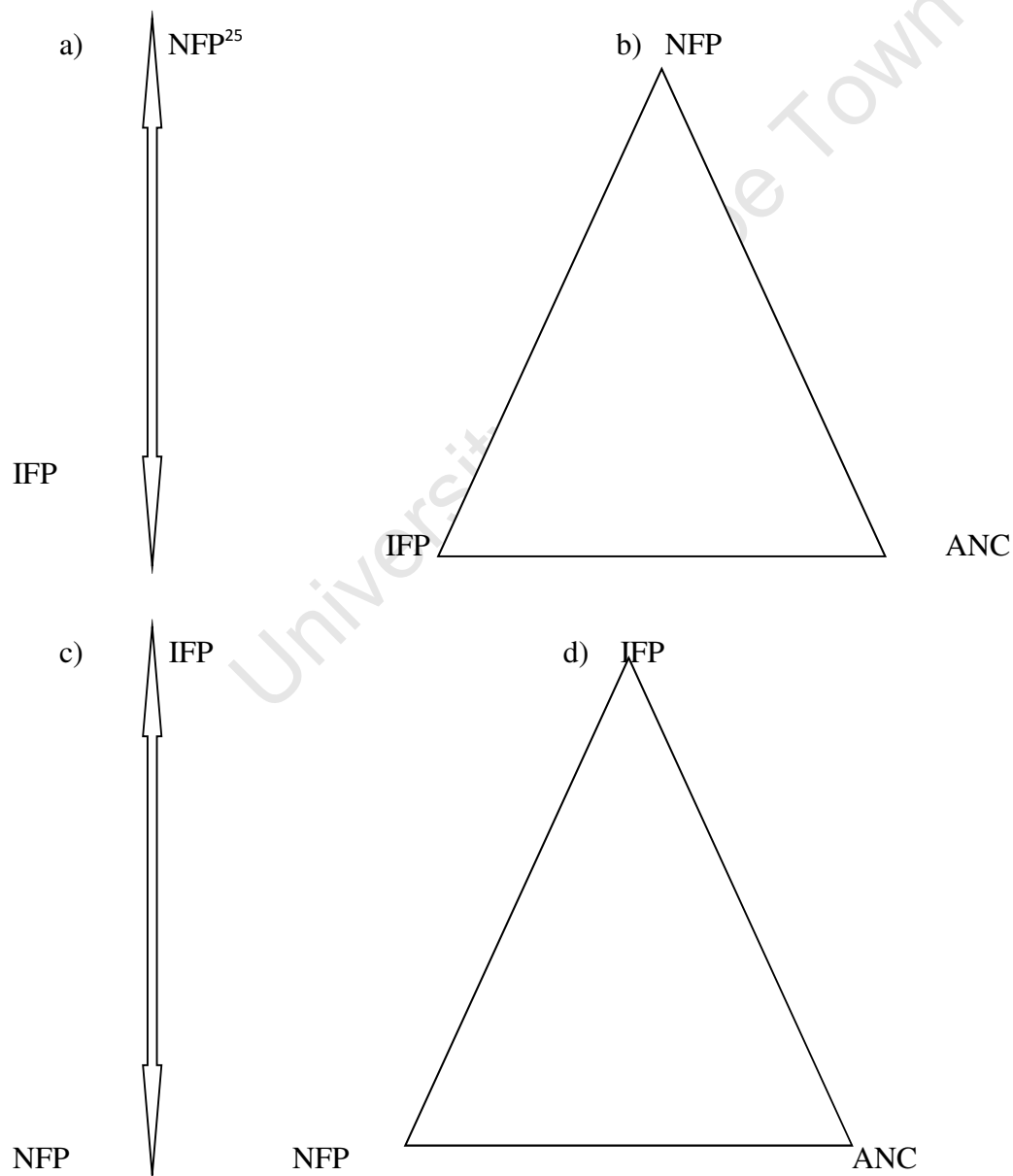
Figure 2.6.2(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the IFP which is and has always been seen as superior to the ANC in the KwaMashu hostel and in the Zululand area. Figure 2.6.2(b) depicts the triangulated relationship between the IFP, ANC and the Congress of the

²³ African National Congress (ANC) was established in 1912.

²⁴ Congress of the People (COPE) was established in 2008.

People (COPE). It is a shift away from Figure 2.6.2(b). Had my research site been the KwaMashu Township broadly, Figure 2.6.2 (a) would be the ANC vs. COPE but COPE has never really been a huge threat to the ANC at the hostel because the hostel has always been dominated and ruled by the IFP. In both diagrams it is clear that the IFP is seen as being on top and hence the most powerful but the transformation and latest socio-economic and political developments at the hostel as well as in northern KwaZulu-Natal shows a totally different picture to the one above. This then justifies the critical interpretation and the relational comparison of the research findings which question the simplistic taken-for-granted view.

Figure: 2.6.3 Politics in 2011



²⁵ National Freedom Party (NFP) was established in 2011.

Figure 2.6.3(a) depicts the dichotomous relationship between the National Freedom Party (NFP) which at its establishment in January 2011 was seen as superior to the IFP. Figure 2.6.3(b) shows the triangulated relationship between the NFP, IFP and ANC. Figure 2.6.3 (c) show the relationship between the IFP and NFP, but this time the IFP is on top compared to Figure 2.6.3(1). Figure 2.6.3 (d) shows the triangular relations between the IFP, NFP and ANC.

Historically, most of the Black African population belonged to either the ANC or the IFP before the establishment of the many other political parties led by Black people²⁶. The Zulus mostly supported the IFP upon its formation in 1975. The hostels in KZN predominantly had IFP support bases, while the hostels in the former Pretoria, Witwatersrand, and Vereeniging (PWV) areas were divided between the IFP and ANC. The hostel that one dwelt in was also a good indicator of which political party s/he supported. But in the past couple of years, there have been many other new political parties that have been established which included COPE and the NFP. Since the IFP was formed, KwaMashu hostel has always been one of its strongest bases. This is why in the 2008 national elections, many people were surprised when approximately 11 000 (Interview with Sibusiso Dlamini, 26 November 2010, who is in a leadership position in the ANC). ANC votes came from the KwaMashu hostel ward 40 which is made up of the hostel and the township.

However, even more important and significant was the breaking away of a reasonable fraction of the IFP to form the NFP. It seemed as if everything was coming to a halt for the IFP. In 2.6.3(a) and (b), the reason why the NFP seemed to have taken a leading powerful position is because of the support it had from the ward councillor at that time for the KwaMashu hostel. In the above figures, any party that is below the top position is regarded as an unacceptable outsider. All of the above figures are a good demonstration of the continuous changes which directly and indirectly impact on the livelihood struggles of the hostel dwellers. For more discussion on the political formations in the rural-urban realm, please refer to chapter 5.

“It would be mistaken in this connection to picture a hierarchical scale stretching between two poles, with the unified will of political power at one extreme and the actual dispersion of differentiated elements at the other ... Everything (the ‘whole’) also *depends* on this level: exploitation and domination, protection and – inseparably – repression. The basis and

²⁶ Most of these other political parties broke away either from ANC or IFP; the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) broke away from ANC in 1959. The National Democratic Convention (NADECO) was established in 2005 by a leader who crossed the floor from the IFP; the South African Democratic Congress (SADECO) broke away from NADECO in 2008; the United Democratic Movement (UDM) with leaders who broke away from ANC and the National Party (NP) formed in 1997. COPE broke away from ANC in 2008; NFP broke away from IFP in 2011.

foundation of the 'whole' is dissociation and separation, maintained as such by the will above; such dissociation and separation are inevitable in that they are fatal as soon as they are maintained in this way, because they keep the moments and elements of social practice away from one another" (Lefebvre, [1974] 1991:366).

All of the above diagrams are incomplete attempts to capture the changes that are taking place at the hostel and in the rural-urban realm. They show the inadequacy of each in the representation of the rural-urban connections, the gender dynamics, the livelihoods contradictions and the political sphere of the hostel and the rural areas linked to it. The reason I consider these representations as only an attempt and not a complete version is because these depictions assume a static position of all the different aspects of life, and the different kinds of spaces represented. The lives of the migrant workers, in part or in whole cannot be understood as stationary; rather they are a process which, as I have tried to show, is forever changing its nature and the shape, resulting in different effects.

It is for this reason that under each diagram, reference is made to the relevant chapter which will unpack and fully engage with the issues that arise in the discussion of such limited perspectives. I am rejecting the binaries as well as triangular perceptions of life because firstly, they leave a lot of dynamics entangled and unexplained, unjustified and unaccounted for. Secondly, they assume unnecessary dominance of one over the other; as a result, they do not embrace the contradictions and complexities which often prevail in critical ethnographical studies. It is for this reason that Hart argued that "[p]recisely what is so important about critical conceptions of spatiality is their insistent focus on relational understandings of the production of space and scale, and the inseparability of meaning and practice. In so doing, they provide a means for grappling with the divergent but increasingly interconnected trajectories of socio-spatial change that are actively constitutive of processes of [urbanisation]" (2006:981).

2.2 From Triangulation to Perplexity

"Fixed oppositions conceal the heterogeneity of either category, the extent to which terms presented as oppositional are interdependent - that is, derive their meaning from internally established contrast rather than from some inherent or pure antithesis. Furthermore, interdependence is usually hierarchical, with one term dominant, prior, and visible, the

opposite subordinate, secondary, and often absent or invisible. Yet, precisely through this arrangement, the second term is present and central because required for the definition of the first” (Scott, 1988:7). One of the assumptions of this thesis is that no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in social relation to the other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways (McClintock, 1995:9).

The diagrams in the section above have attempted to highlight some of the most important parts or spheres of the hostel. Indeed there are many things that the section above does simultaneously: (i) It shows the changes, the evolving nature of the everyday life struggles of the hostel dwellers in their political spheres, urban accommodation, rural-urban connections; gender, generational and in livelihoods procurement. (ii) It presents a dichotomous understanding of the hostel and rejects it because of its limitations. (iii) It presents a triangulated understanding of the hostel and rejects it because of its limitations. (iv) It shows implicitly and/or explicitly the relations and processes taking place at the hostels. (v) It shows the gendered spatiality of the hostels both internally and externally. In total this shows that the perplexity is continuous; active; on-going and instrumental.

In this section I try to de-mystify what I have presented by putting into context the diagrams above through emphasising the key argument that has been made in chapter one. I posit that the KwaMashu hostel should be seen as a space of perplexity where neither the imaginations of the different stakeholders (men, women, children, government/municipality, councillors/political parties and townships) have been realised through and after the construction of the CRUs. The state of perplexity at the hostel, while it is not an ideal situation for any party, is unfortunately inevitable. Sometimes it occurred as a result of certain planned initiatives and sometimes as a result of unplanned occurrences; partly it happened as a result of the known and sometimes the unknown. It has happened mainly as a result of the foundation laid by the apartheid government but it has also happened as a result of the transformation brought about by the democratic government. It occurred because of women’s persistence and men’s resistance. It occurred because of people’s unfortunate circumstances, but also because of people chasing their dreams, fighting for survival, and surviving through others. Only a few have given up; most are still fighting. Most come to the hostel for better opportunities while some go back to the rural areas for a more peaceful, normal life. Some are growing strong and expanding while some are shrinking and losing the battle. In the midst of all this, people are dying on a daily basis because of the high violent

crime rate in the hostel as well as high HIV/AIDS rates. Many children are being born out-of-wedlock through unplanned pregnancies, unreported rape cases and sometimes voluntarily because of the child support grant. Indeed it is in these conflictual processes that meanings and identities are produced.

The sections above show that the transformation taking place at the hostels is not about selecting two points of origin and culmination from history and joining them by a straight line. “It is the shifts, slides, discontinuities, the unintended moves, what is suppressed as much as what was asserted, that one can get a sense of this complex movement, not as so many accidental or disturbing factors but as constitutive of the very historical rationality of its process” (Chatterjee, 1986:vii).

2.3 The Production of Space

“An analysis should always stress the social texts and social processes human actors are involved in, cannot be over-emphasised. The implication of this is that the description of the ‘dramaturgy of everyday life’ is never examined in and for itself ... the concern is with dynamic changes and their explanation” Sitas (1983:12).

The diagrams in section 2.1 have already begun to show how is it that I understand space and place as actively produced by social beings and their stretched-out social relations. Obviously, the diagrams do not disregard the role played by the “privileged actor, the politician” (Lefebvre, 1974:12) in the production of space; instead they further argue that people are able to produce new spaces and meanings of their own in conditions that are not of their own making²⁷. “In South Africa, the ruling class have possessed considerable political and economic power, enabling them to design social structures, to create and manipulate classes, borders, and communities, to destroy and reconstruct families and even to enter most brutally into private domain of sexuality” (Bozzoli, 1991:1). The diagrams above have shown that “[w]e are thus confronted by an indefinite multitude of spaces, each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next: geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global” (Lefebvre, [1974]1991:8). The above section has indeed shown that “[s]pace does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations” (Massey, 2005:10); instead space, identities and entities work in and

²⁷ A conversation with Professor Hart (October, 2010)

through one another. Space is produced through and embedded in the social practices of people (Massey, 2005).

On the other hand, the assumption that is generally accepted about place is that it is closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home', meaningful, lived and everyday (Massey, 2005:6; see Massey, 1994; Hart, 2002; 2006) while space is accepted as an surface, continuous and a given, outside, abstract and meaningless (Massey, 2005:4, see Massey, 1994; Hart, 2002; 2006). Hart rather argued that, "space and place are *both* conceived in terms of embodied practices and processes of production that are simultaneously material and discursive" (2006: 994). In this way, space and place and space and time cannot be seen in dichotomised terms. Merrifield justified this idea, writing that "Lefebvre has no truck with binary thought and surrendered practice. Hence he has sound reasons for positing a triad. To begin with, he wants to ensure that space doesn't simply get equated to the abstract and place doesn't get equated to the concrete. But, neither, too, does he want to give credence to the opposite view. He doesn't accept that space has overwhelmed place-that in our high-tech, media-saturated society space has decoupled from its place mooring. The idea that reality is now rootless and 'nonplace' would strike Lefebvre, the grand theorist of everyday life, as patently ridiculous and politically dubious. He would thereby rally against the 'network society' promulgated by former colleague Manuel Castells; namely that the 'space of flows' has substituted 'the place of spaces (2006:135). In contrast to the way in which Lefebvre ([1974]1991); Massey (1984; 1994; 2005; 2007) and Hart (2002; 2006) have conceptualised space, Castells (1996) argued that space organises time, that time is local in the network society and that space is organised hierarchically. For him, space is the expression of society and not a production of society and social processes. "*A place is a locale whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity*" (Castells, 1996:453) (original emphasis). He talks about the *timeless time* which is the only emerging, *dominant* form of social time in the network society. He argued that social domination is exercised through the selective inclusion and exclusion of functions and people in temporal and spatial frames (1996:465) (original emphasis).

The idea of space as a production of beings or entities is also powerfully advocated by Massey, (1984; 1994; 2005; 2007). In utilising this framework, this thesis will make use of Massey's three major propositions about space. The first proposition is that space is a product of interrelations, constituted through interactions across global-local; urban-rural relations.

“If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon existence of plurality” (Massey, 2005:9). By implication, one can understand that space stretches out across boundaries. Space sees and/or fears no boundaries; however, boundaries are the product of power-laden practices. The people in general, and the migrant workers/hostel dwellers and their interrelations and processes specifically, are the major advocates for space. This means that I am able to write about space primarily because of and through them, as advocated by Massey in the above quotation. Space is constructed out of social relations; the point is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations ‘stretched out’ (1994:2).

The three most important things to note at this stage about space and social relations are, firstly, that they are always in plurality. As it has been highlighted above, there are always many spaces sometimes ‘each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within’. Secondly, they are never still, but are ever changing, being continuously produced by the people and everyday life situations. Thirdly, they are gendered through and through (Massey, 1994; 2005). As beautifully affirmed by Gramsci, “[t]his thought sees as the dominant factor in history, not raw economic facts, but man, men in societies, men in relation to one another, reaching agreements with one another, developing through these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will; men coming to understand economic [social and political] facts, judging them and adapting them to their will until this becomes the driving force of the [society] and moulds objective reality, which lives and moves and comes to resemble a current volcanic lava that can be channelled wherever and in whatever way the will determines” ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000:33). This citation perfectly matches Sitas’s quotation above about the importance of social text, social beings and social processes. Indeed it is scholars like Sitas and Lefebvre who see the utmost importance of the role played by social actors in the production of space and meaning.

The second major proposition is that space is a sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity. That recognition of multiple trajectories is one implication of taking space seriously (Massey, 2007; 2005; 1994). On the same note, Lefebvre ([1974]1991) provided a broader and more extended understanding of the production of space about a decade or so before the publication of Massey’s book titled *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (1984). “There are,” he says “a multiplicity of undefined instances,” even though, in the plurality, a specific moment is “relatively privileged,”

relatively absolute, definable, and definitive, at least for a moment. Each moment, accordingly, is a “partial totality” and “reflected and refracted a totality of global praxis,” including the dialectical relations of society with itself and the relations of social man with nature.” “The moment was what Lefebvre on numerous occasions calls ‘the modality of presence’. A moment, be it that of contemplation or struggle ... is never absolutely absolute or unique” (Merrifield, 2006:28).

Drawing from the threads of the first proposition, space is produced in the sense of contemporaneous plurality, where distinct trajectories coexist. This means that other things, other processes and relationships do not come to a standstill in order for the other to take charge; instead things happen simultaneously. Further without space there is no multiplicity and vice versa. It is therefore critical to see multiplicity and space as co-constitutive (Massey, 2005:9).

The third major proposition is that space is on-going and imperfect which means that it is always under construction. It is a product that is made out of relations embedded in social and material practices; it is never finished and never closed (Massey, 2005). The first and the third propositions seem to be more relevant for my argument that it is limiting and inadequate to move from a binary to a triangle because one is still assuming an end to the social and material practices and relations of the people. This is why a more complicated, interconnected network kind of a diagram would be needed to try and depict the social relations, cultural formations, gender relations, political relations, and economic relations existing between and within the different kind of livelihoods procurement and rural-urban relations taking place in these spaces.

By understanding that place and space as actively produced and reproduced, we can understand that both history and geography are indeed products of relations and inter-relations (first propositions) and for this to be so, there must be multiplicity (second proposition). The on-going-ness of the construction of space deems it imperfect (third proposition) and always shifting and incomplete. “Perhaps we could imagine space [geography and history and present] as simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey, 2005:9). This reflection and establishment of space and place identity is framed through a geographical imagination of the CRU as family housing vs. hostels as men’s place.

It seems that the hostel, because of its complexity is a space where the question ‘whose geography?’ arises often, unlike Massey’s argument; that the contest between the imaginations of the hostel being ‘a place for men’; family, a community space full of children form part of the daily politics of space. The understanding of space (in truth, a turning of space into time, geography into history) refuses coevalness. (Massey, 2007:23). “In most situations there are multiple geographical imaginations in play. And even though it might be rarely evident, there is contest between these imaginations: ‘whose geography?’ Very often the politics of a situation would be clarified where the geographical imaginations and conceptualisations of space made explicit” (Massey, 2007:24).

What is important to note in the picture being drawn by these propositions is that the relationship that space has with the place, people, identities, social relations and multiplicity is definitely not in dualism or in a triangle as shown in the above diagrams. Instead, there is no way to quantitatively measure the scale or the role played by each as all are seen as important, interconnected, interdependent and dynamic. The relational conceptualisation of space and place that we have here is the one that sees the hostel not as different from the township, the rural as not different from the urban, and it does not imagine rural dwellers as having their own different and separate trajectories, their own histories, spaces and perhaps different futures. It sees them as a part and parcel of the other because of the overlapping and interdependence between the two. The rural constitutes the urban through many ways, many people and through many things. The rural and the urban are not closed spaces, they are continually being produced in relation to each other ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000).

Furthermore, Lefebvre’s production of space theory as summarised by Merrifield speaks of the “spatial triad”. He argued that there are *representations of space*. Representations of space in the context of this thesis would mean the conceptions that the past South African authorities had in mind about the creation and the functions of the hostels and the compounds. In this process they used their ideology, power and knowledge in order to make this a reality. Lefebvre argued that representations of space are “intimately tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ those relations impose, and hence to knowledge” (Merrifield, 2006:109). This can now be adapted to mean the current government’s visions and schemes it had about the construction of the CRUs. In this case we have seen that because the politician is the privileged actor and has authority, it has been able to implement

the CRU, doing away with the hostel system even if it was against the views and preferences of the hostel dwellers.

This brings us to the second moment of the spatial triad, which are spaces of representations. Spaces of representations are lived spaces, the spaces of everyday experience. Lived spaces for our purposes are the actual hostels (CRUs) and the people who live in them. The experiences of the hostel dwellers play a huge role in the spaces of representations. The concept of space-time becomes important in this moment because lived spaces are dynamic (Massey, 1994). The final moment is the spatial practices. The spatial practices are basically the processes that take place in the hostels on a daily basis. Therefore the representations of space are the conceived space, conceived by the hegemonic power. Spaces of representations are the experiences of the social actors living in the produced spaces. Spatial practices are the practices and interactions that are performed by the social actors through the social relations. The relations between these three moments are never stable (Lefebvre, [1974]1991).

2.4 Rural-Urban Continuum

“Lefebvre refers to a more wholesome organization of urban and rural space. He points out that the city was once an inspiring organic unity intimately bounded with the country side; the two realms coexisted in a delicate but real symbiosis. Now, this symbiosis, this organic unity has been undone, dismembered, dislocated” (Merrifield, 2006:62).

The rural-urban continuum is another important theoretical framework that this study is based on. It looks at the “on-going importance, but changing character of rural-urban connections” (Hart and Sitas, 2004:32). In rejecting the ‘positivist incrustations’, this thesis has embraced several studies (Hart and Sitas, 2004; Kok, *et al*, 2003; Elder, 2003a; 2003b; Englund, 2002; James, 2001; ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000); Tacoli, 2003; 1998; Smit, 1998; Mamdani, 1996) that have argued that it is limiting to dichotomize the rural and urban because, in actual fact these two are interlinked and interdependent; it is impossible to converse about one and not refer to some relationship and connections it has to the other. It is fundamental and useful to be able to identify the importance of the interconnections between these dichotomies that exist in our society. The relationship of these dichotomized concepts is in fact far more complex, fluid and changing than theory suggests. It is the interdependence

and the relatedness of these concepts that shape our thinking and behaviour (James, 2001, see McClintock, 1995).

This idea of a rural-urban continuum is appropriate for the above-mentioned ideas of the production of space. Rural-urban connections seem to be intricately interconnected with the social relations of migrant workers as much as the idea of socially produced spaces is intricately interconnected with the stretched out social relations of the migrant workers. It seems relevant for me to argue like Massey (2005) that rural-urban connections do not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations. This implies that the lives of the migrants and their relations bring into existence the rural-urban continuum and determine the level at which the relations stretch out. What the findings will show in the forthcoming chapters is that these relations are not closed, they do not have boundaries, and they are not static. Instead they go on continuously, taking different shapes and directions which are difficult to predict and predetermine, i.e. the presence of women and children in the former men's hostel is still like a dream to many people, both women and men, both in the rural and urban areas. As correctly argued by Hart and Sitas (2004:34); people's lives cut across multiple spaces and arenas of everyday practice.

The importance of the labour migration and rural-urban connections more specifically lays in livelihoods procurement, the multiplication or diversification the livelihood strategies. As a result of the struggles that occur in the name of livelihoods, this thesis sees rural-urban connections as major points of harmonies and tensions, agreements and contradictions, securities and insecurities and triumphs and struggles. In writing about rural-urban connections, the focus is in running away from marginalisation of the rural by the urban. In South Africa, the rural firstly actively incorporated itself by resistance through liberation struggles, which were intertwined with livelihood struggles. Later it was 'officially' incorporated through the change in the governing systems of the country (see Hart and Sitas, 2004).

According to Mamdani, "[i]n the linkage between the urban and the rural, the rural is the key. So long as the rural is not reformed, the perversion of civil society is inevitable. This is why the limits of the current South African reform are so serious" (1996:297-8). Lefebvre suggested that in order for the fragmentation, separation and disintegration of the rural and the urban to be reversed, mobilization of great and many forces is required and that in the

actual course of its execution there would be continuing need, stage by stage for motivation and orientation ([1974]1991).

“The [last] point I want to make is that space and place, spaces and places and our sense of them (and such related things as our gender of mobility) are gendered through and through. Moreover, they are gendered in a myriad different ways, which vary between cultures and over times. And this gendering of space and place both reflects *and has effects back on* the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live” (Massey, 1994:186).

2.5 Feminist Theoretical Framework and Qualitative Research

“That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man--when I could get it--and bear the lash as well! Ain’t I a woman? I have born thirteen children, and seen all of them into slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?” (Schneir, 1972:94-5).

This beautiful and challenging quotation from Schneir is powerfully groundbreaking and evokes many highly critical issues relevant to this thesis. While womanhood and gender might seem a critical factor; the issues raised relate to more than about gender. They speak to the issues of labour, paid and unpaid labour; sexuality, reproductive and productive work; faith and religion, and are specifically located in a particular geographical setting as well as historical phase, not that this makes it irrelevant for our work in this space and at this time. Undeniably, it is about race and class. All these issues raised in this quote comfortably find space in this thesis.

The way I conceptualise gender is according to Scott (1988:2), who argued that gender means knowledge about sexual difference. She understood knowledge

“to mean the understanding produced by cultures and societies of human relationships, in this case those between men and women. Such knowledge is not absolute but always relative. It is produced in complex ways within large epistemic frames that themselves have an autonomous history. Its uses and meanings become

contested politically and are the means by which relationships of power – of domination and subordination - are constructed. Knowledge refers not only to ideas but to institutions and structures, every day practices as well as specialized rituals, all of which constitute social relationships. Knowledge is a way of ordering the world; as such it is not prior to social organization, it is inseparable from social organization. It follows then that gender is the social organization of sexual difference. But this does not mean that gender reflects or implements fixed or natural physical differences between women and men; rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences. These meanings vary across cultures, social groups, and time since nothing about the body, including women's reproductive organs determines univocally how social divisions will be shaped".

Gender is not a synonym for women or women's issues (McClintock, 1995). In line with Scott, Elder (2003a:10) defined gender as "the dialectical social and political process whereby masculine and feminine identities are constructed from without and negotiated (i.e. resisted, claimed or mitigated) by those biologically sexed individuals to whom they are assigned. Examples of gender identities include obvious examples like mother and father (social and political meaning) assigned to males and females (biological meaning)". For McClintock (1995:5) gender is simply not a question of sexuality but also a question of subdued labour and imperial plunder as much as race is not simply a question of skin colour but also a question of labour power cross-hatched by gender.

Qualitative research methods tend to be preferred by feminists, because they allow participants to raise their voice and for their feelings, meanings and experiences to be heard. The researcher comes to participants with an idea of understanding the lived experiences, and their everyday life encounters from their perspective, unlike quantitative researchers who come with predetermined structured questions, instruments and theories. However, the preference for qualitative research by feminists is not because quantitative research is irrelevant or seen as being totally against the feminist research agenda. Rather, it is the objectification of women and the exploitative nature of the relationship between the researcher and the researched that is being questioned.

Jones and Barron (2007) describe feminist research as that which puts the social construction of gender at the centre of one's inquiry. The feminist theoretical framework in this study is

seen an inevitable vantage point. No matter which side a person approaches this study from, whether it be from the perspective of livelihoods or labour migration, or hostels or rural-urban connections, all these themes raise an important predictable feature of gender, gender (in)equality, gender tensions and resistance. The patriarchal character of our society begs that we dedicate specific attention to these issues. Regardless of the changes that have been taking place in South Africa and specifically at the hostels, the hierarchical and unequal relationship between men and women is continuously perpetuated (Bozzoli, 1983).

As mentioned above, in agreement with Collins, I argue that instead of starting with gender and then adding other variables such as age, sexual orientation, race, social class and religion, Black feminist thought sees these distinctive systems of oppression as being part of one, overarching structure of domination (Collins, 1990:221). In line with the current South African (hostel) situation, the distinguishing feature of Black feminist thought is its insistence that the changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change (*ibid.*).

In her article titled “Learning from the Outsider within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought” Collins (1986) explores the three themes which are innate characteristics of Black feminist thought. Firstly, it is women’s space to define and value themselves in addition to the characterisations and definitions which have been attached to Black women by outsiders. For me, it is important to critically unpack and examine women’s positions on how they see themselves in different situations as compared to how other people (any group of people that falls outside Black southern African women). Secondly, Collins explores the interlocking nature of oppression based on race, gender and class. These interlocking spheres have already been highlighted in chapter one and by the above quote. Thirdly, she examines Afro-American women’s culture. As a result of distinct geographies which are always interlinked with histories, my application of the third theme compels me to adjust it to Black South African women’s culture. I strongly believe that “[i]n spite of differences created by historical era, age, social class, sexual orientation or ethnicity, the legacy of struggle against racism and sexism is a common thread binding all African... women” (1990:22).

The theoretical and methodological frameworks that I am using enable me not to try and create a new theory but to work with and extend existing theories. While Mupotsa who is also

a young Southern African feminist has been greatly influenced by Collins, she still maintains her own, unique standpoint. Her article titled “An African Feminist standpoint” examines “how we both dress and perform our bodies in various social spaces; about how we begin to construct the discourse of ‘our culture’, of good girls and social misfits, who wear the labels of ‘prostitute’, ‘lesbian’, or ‘rural’, (despite our true actions or *conditions*) within urban spaces in contemporary Southern Africa; considering the impact of history of a geographical apartheid, a migrant labour system, the production and re/production of notions of femininity closely associated with domesticity and the very dominant narrative of female respectability as dominant themes” (2007:1).

Although Collins is writing specifically from an African American perspective, it is not surprising that a Black South African woman academic finds more relevance in Collins’ writing than white South African women writers. By this I do not mean to generalise about the way that white South African women or African American women write. As it will be clear in the chapters to follow, everything about the hostel is gendered and everything about gender is politicised, whether it be space or place; whether it be history or geography. This makes it pertinent for the research approach used to be sensitive to political and gender dynamics.

2.6 Research Methods and Methodology

The rationale behind the choice of a particular research approach and specific methods like in-depth, semi-structured and life history interviews in data production was to enable the researcher to acquire meaning at a deeper level, and insights into the content through the lived experiences of the participants (Dhunpath and Samuels, 2009: viii). Oral life histories, interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation constitute the primary research methods I used. I have critically used secondary material with the intention of tracing, mapping and proving or disproving as well as to locate this study within a relevant context in the South African sociological realm of enquiry. The secondary material has helped greatly in explaining the making of the hostel spaces over time and the primary research has problematised and harmonized the research issues by identifying, explaining, justifying and questioning the changes that have been taking place, looking at the hostels vs. CRU, the livelihoods struggles, the rural-urban character, and the negotiation of gender roles, relations and responsibilities.

2.6.1 Research Strategy

The general orientation in conducting this research has been qualitative research methods, specifically historical critical ethnographies. While, Bryman (2004:19) argued that one of the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research is that the latter employs measurement and that qualitative researchers do not, I am of the opinion that “the differences are deeper than the superficial issue of the presence or absence of quantification” (*ibid.*). The significant and most relevant point about qualitative research is that it starts with an assumption that individuals have an active role in the construction of social reality and that research methods that can capture this process of social construction are required (Boeijs, 2010:6).

2.6.2 Research Questions

As a result of the ethnographic nature of this study, many questions were posed to the respondents; however this section only highlights the core of those questions. By looking at the lives of the migrant workers and/or hostel dwellers (historically known to be men), I wanted to find out what the struggles, challenges, difficulties and disputes are that these people encounter in their mission to make a livelihood and/or earn a living in the rural-urban spaces. The broader questions that triggered the study were:

- What is the nature of the changes taking place in hostels?
- How have the social, economic and political conditions changed in the past few years?
- In what ways are the changes negative?
- In what ways are the changes positive?
- What impact does this have on the livelihood struggles of the hostel dweller?
- What impact does this have for migrant workers?

The following questions are more specific to rural-urban connections and to livelihood struggles; they were posed directly to all interviewees:

- What are the rural-urban connections that exist?
- Are they becoming stronger or weaker?
- What are the factors that influence the rural-urban connections?

- What are the differences that can be identified between rural and urban areas?
- What are the main livelihood struggles that migrant workers encounter?
- What is the main source of income?
- What are other sources of income?
- How sustainable are the various survival strategies being used?
- What links do those strategies have with the rural areas and what is the extent of these linkages?
- What alternatives do people have in times of distress?
- Is going back home (to the rural areas) an option?

The following questions are more specific to gender-related issues and were posed directly to all interviewees:

- What implications does the new nature of settlement (CRU) have for the migrant workers?
- How has the presence of women and children changed lives?
- What role do women play in livelihood struggles experienced in hostel settings?
- How do people obtain and retain access to the hostel?
- Who controls access?
- What are the conditions of access?
- Are they the same for men and women?

2.6.3 Choosing Research Sites: KwaMashu Hostel, eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa

The objective of choosing multiple sites was not to compare the perspectives from each site but to enable the research to have a comprehensive insight into the whole, the connections, reconnections and disconnections of the hostel dwellers/migrant workers and their families. My intention was to examine the movements, circulation and the changes in cultural beliefs, value systems and people in disseminate space-time. A multi-sited ethnography allowed me to see vantage points for generating new understandings and the production of new meanings (Hart, 2002; 2006).

While a case study is defined by the fact that it is a bounded system (Merriman, 1988), it is not an appropriate methodology for this research because it assumes dependence on a single case, which then renders the study incapable of providing a generalized conclusion. My theoretical frames refuse to see place and space as bounded units. As has been highlighted above, the hostel is seen as a vantage point from which we can begin to understand the livelihood struggles, social structures, relationships, spaces, processes, interconnections, disconnections and re-connections of South Africa as a whole. The other four research sites have been chosen primarily because they are tightly linked to the KwaMashu hostel through the hostel dwellers and/or migrant workers who continuously move back and forth in an effort to satisfy both individual and family social and economic needs. They have been used as sites for the investigation of the changing character of rural-urban connections and the livelihood struggles attached to their lives.

2.6.3.1 Urban Research Site: KwaMashu CRU/Hostel

KwaMashu hostel has been used as a primary research site because of its importance in accommodating the majority of the people who migrate from the rural areas in search of employment opportunities. This site is very critical and meaningful for the hostel dwellers because more than half of their lives are spent in this place. They spend the most productive and important part of their lives here. KwaMashu hostel was a 'men's hostel' which mainly accommodated rural men from northern KwaZulu-Natal (traditional Zulu territory), with the rest coming from the Natal Midlands, and Southern Natal (Zulu, 1993). It is one of the biggest hostels in the KwaZulu-Natal province and as a result of the new reconfigurations at the hostel it also probably has a larger population than any other hostel in KwaZulu-Natal.

KwaMashu Township is approximately 20 km north of the Central Business District (CBD) of Durban. It was originally a location for the Black community established in 1957 in terms of the Black Authority Act 68 of 1951. This area was initially designed for the population that was forcefully removed from Umkhumbane (now called Cato Manor) in terms of the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950. Houses were erected in phases and occupied by Blacks from March 1958. These people experienced high levels of political mobilisation in the 1980s and the area also became notorious for criminal and gang activity (INK Joint Government Annual Business Plan, 2004-5). Before the establishment of the township, the area was a sugarcane

plantation owned by Marshall Campbell whom the township was named after. Townships are defined as formally planned and racially segregated residential areas for non-white residents at the peripheries of South Africa. Under the apartheid government, townships were characterised by a very tight control, but there was a gradual break down of control mechanisms during the 1980s (Godehart, 2006:1). While KwaMashu was primarily known to accommodate disgruntled residents because of displacements from Umkhumbane from the late 1950s to 1970s, in the 1980s to the 1990s it was largely known for its political violence (Injobo Nebandla, 2005).

2.6.3.2 Rural Research Sites: eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa

I visited these sites in the second round of fieldwork which took place in 2010 and 2011. In each of these sites I stayed for one week for my first visit and then went on one-five day visits whenever it was relevant, except in Nongoma where I spent more time through attending funerals and other cultural activities, I also spent more than a week at Christmas time in 2010 and in 2011. No particular order was followed in accessing as well as visiting the rural areas. Rather, this was determined by the availability of the appropriate key informants.



Source: <http://www.africasafari.co.za/kznmap.htm> accessed 24 January 2011

Figure 2.7 Map of KwaZulu Natal Province

2.7 Gaining Access

Gaining entry and building and maintaining trust with participants is one of the key issues in participant observation (Boeije, 2010). According to Bryman (2004), gaining access to a social setting that is relevant for the research problem can be the most difficult step. He argued that having access to a public setting is easier than a setting that is not public. In this case, it can be argued that the setting is public and as a result it was not so difficult to gain access to the KwaMashu hostel and the northern KwaZulu Natal rural areas. The setting in the rural areas can be said to be private because I had to go to individual households and interview people but gaining entry was not impossible because I used a relevant key informant who was from that particular community.

2.7.1 Gaining Access in the CRU

In the process of gaining access, I took time to get to know what the community considered ethical and what was not ethical. I sourced information about the CRU, its authority structures and how it functioned. Then I obtained contact information for the ward councillor and made an appointment. The first appointment went well and there was a follow up meeting where I provided the councillor with relevant documents which he requested. After that the councillor introduced me to the person who became my key informant, the late Mr Dumisani Ngcobo, the block chairman of the largest zone of the hostel and also a member of the IFP branch committee.

2.7.2 Gaining Access in the Rural Areas

The way I gained access to the rural areas was always through my key informant who was from that area and lived in the hostel. The key informants took responsibility for introducing me to the leadership of the local area (*induna or iphoyisa lenduna*) as well as showing and introducing me to the households with people who were linked to the KwaMashu hostel. They took me around the area and invited me to attend whatever interesting events that were taking place at that time in that area.

I conducted research at Nongoma, Ebukhalini area which is approximately 10km from Nongoma town. I lived with Mthembu* family. My key informant from Nongoma was a male who was in his mid-twenties, unmarried, and unemployed and relied in casual jobs, and had one child who lived with his grandmother in the rural areas. In the rural areas, he lived with his child, granny and two younger siblings as their parents had passed away. In the hostel he lived in the CRU with his girlfriend.

I conducted research at eMpangeni at Mnqagayi area which is approximately 30km from eMpangeni town. I lived with Lukhozi* family. My key informant from Mpangeni was a male who was in his late thirties, married to one wife and was in the process of taking a second one, employed as a security guard, and had four children. His first wife is a housewife in the rural area and the second wife-to-be takes casual jobs and has one child with him. In

the rural area, he lives with his first wife, their children and children of relatives. In the hostel he lives in a block house with male relatives.

I conducted research at eShowe at Dlangubo which is approximately 10km from eShowe town I lived with Ntanzi* family. My key informant from eShowe was a female in her early thirties, unmarried, unemployed with three children, who relies on social grants, support from her boyfriend and casual jobs. She is based in the rural area since she assumed the headship role after her parents passed away. In the rural area, she lives with her children and her younger sisters and their children. In the hostel she used to live in a shack which belonged to her late father.

I conducted research at Hlabisa at Emabhanoyini area, 2km from Hlabisa town. I lived with Ngcamu* family. My key informant from Hlabisa was a female in her mid-twenties, unmarried, who relies on casual jobs and social grants and has two children. Her children both used to live with their different fathers but in mid-2010 she fetched one of her children from his father's house and lives with him at the hostel. In the rural area, she lives with her parents and siblings. In the hostel she lives in a shack which belonged to her late female cousin.

2.8 Sampling Methods

In terms of the sample population, the initial plan was to focus mainly on men and women who had lived in the hostel for more than 20 years because of the symbolical meaning of the abolition of influx control which took place 25 years ago in South Africa. This is the group of people who would have seen and experienced a number of significant changes in the hostel specifically and more broadly in the realm of rural-urban connections.

This was however not to be the case. The younger generation was incorporated as I found them more accessible for interviews, focus groups and informal conversations. The high rates of unemployment among women in the hostel as well as in my own age group can be seen as influential factors for this diversion on the sample population. Another reason is the fact that older men are slowly leaving the hostel setting because of various reasons, as hinted in chapter one by the few that remain. The final reason was the fact that most of them were at

work and came back later in the evening. This reduced their availability to me. During the first phase of my fieldwork, the availability of older men was largely reduced because of their work commitments. However the fact that I decided to live at the hostel full time for nine months in the second phase changed things and gave me more access and firsthand experience with the dwellers' everyday lives and livelihood struggles.

Non-probability sampling meant that some members of the population were more likely to be selected than others. I used non-probability sampling methods because of their strength in identifying unique and informative cases. I used purposive sampling to identify respondents intentionally according to the needs of the study (Boeije, 2010). Such sampling is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling (Bryman, 2004:333). The proportionality of the sample was not the primary concern of this study; rather it was the descriptions and intense explanation which would be provided by the targeted sample which was important.

At the initial stage of the research I used snowball sampling method to identify relevant participants. The snowball or networking method entails asking an initial number of participants for the names of others who are subsequently approached (Boeije, 2010:40). The primary participants for this study are men and women who live in the former single sex hostel. The secondary participants were the nuclear and extended family members residing in the rural areas. This category also included relatives and other social networks that the primary participants had across the rural and urban continuum. The sample population is made up of all relevant socio-economic categories of hostel dwellers; men and women, young and old, employed and unemployed, residents and leadership; from the rural and urban areas, dwelling in shacks, blocks and CRUs.

2.9 Data Collection

Various data collection methods were used in this study. All data collection methods have strengths and weaknesses, and using a variety of methods overcame this challenge.

2.9.1 In-depth, Semi-Structured Interviews

In the semi-structured interviews, I had a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide but the interviewee had a great deal of leeway in how to reply. What can be understood as rambling in a structured interview was encouraged in the in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This is because I was more interested in what the interviewee saw as relevant and important (Bryman, 2004).

This method allowed me to depart from the interview guide and did not prevent me from probing for the questions related to my research objectives and main research question. Questions from the interview guide did not always follow each other according to the list. The way the interviewee responded shaped the way I conducted the interview. Some interviewees were interviewed more than once and sometimes more than twice; rich and detailed answers were the end result of this process.

2.9.2 Life History Interviews

A life history interview invites the subject to look back in detail on his or her entire life. It is an unstructured interview which covers the totality of the individual's life (Bryman, 2004:322). Life history interviews were been conducted with migrant workers who have lived in the hostels since the 1960s to the present. This included people who have retired and returned to the rural areas. These interviews were relevant for understanding the changing hostel as a space of perplexity, rural-urban connections, and changing gender dynamics in and out of the households as narrated by individuals. These issues relate to their encounters with livelihood struggles in rural and urban areas as well as the changes taking place in the hostels.

I found it impossible to differentiate between a life history and oral history interviews. While an oral history interview is said to be more specific in tone in that the subject is asked to reflect upon specific events or periods in the past (Bryman, 2004:323), I found it impossible to disentangle the person from history. This means that the events that took place at the hostel and/or in the rural areas cannot be separated from the stories of the migrant workers as long as they were there or as long as it affected them in one way or another. It is important to note

that all of the categories listed by Atkinson (1998) for a life story interview (see Bryman, 2004) were incorporated into the life history interviews conducted in all research sites.

2.9.3 Focus Group Discussions

I first used this method of collecting data at the beginning of 2009 as a way of gaining entry into the field after access was granted by the hostel leadership. This was a good way for me to get introduced to the community as well as for the community to be introduced to me. A lot of interesting dynamics could be easily noted, which were then followed up in the one-on-one interviews that took place.

Focus group discussions were facilitated with hostel dwellers to discuss specific themes that could be discussed in groups. The common characteristics that were shared by the subjects are the age group, gender, and organisational and housing environment structures i.e. shack dwellers; old men. The flexibility of the focus group discussions uncovered attitudes and new insights that could not be achieved by the other research methods. This method was also useful as it could be used with people who are illiterate (Bryman, 2004).

What I found to be a weakness with this method is that participants sometimes failed to respect each other's perceptions i.e. older men on the issue of the presence of women in the hostel. Depending on which view was strongest within the group, this would then silence the minority members of the group. This happened regardless of the fact that there were set ground rules or basic principles i.e. there is no wrong or right answer and there had to be mutual respect. A focus group of this kind took place at the beginning of 2009 and even by the end of 2010 there was a participant who still did not want to be part of any formal research activity that I conducted, whether it was an interview or a focus group discussion because he felt isolated as he was against the presence of women at the hostel, whereas most of his fellow participants were already living with and enjoying the benefits of the presence of women at the hostel. What assisted me in continuing to get information from him was that when I was doing participant observation, I lived in the same block as him so we bumped into each other every now and then. Because he is an old person his daily greetings always gave a bit of important information relating to the hostel.

2.9.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation is defined as a “process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided relatively long relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association” (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:18).

Participant observation was previously mainly viewed as a means to observe but is now considered essential in detecting meaning, feelings and experiences (Boeije, 2010:59). Although participant observation is useful in studying almost every aspect of human existence pertaining to human meanings and interactions from the insiders’ perspective, such as social-cultural rules of conduct, it is particularly useful when little is known about the phenomenon, when views of insiders and outsiders are opposed or stereotyped and when the phenomenon is hidden from the view of outsiders (Jorgensen 1989). The second and the third points seem to be the most relevant to me as a researcher in this study. Participant observation has enabled me to understand and to look at hostel life differently as I had the opportunity of being an insider as well as an outsider simultaneously. I did not constitute myself as an outside observer and did not estrange myself from people and processes.

My emphasis has been to see things from the frame of reference of the participants. I immersed myself in the hostel as well as in the specified rural areas for an extended period of time. I made regular observations of the behaviour of the hostel dwellers, through listening and engaging in conversations.

The kind of participant observation that I undertook is not covert participant observation. This allowed me access to the lives of hostel dwellers and their families sometimes without actively having the dwellers telling their stories directly. I recorded field notes from what I observed. This process included attending block and community meetings, and participating in locally organised events like traditional dance concerts and important cultural ceremonies.

2.9.5 Secondary Data Collection

This was mainly in the form of books, journal articles, dissertations, government documents and newspaper articles. This method was useful in gathering critical material about the research sites

and its dynamics that could not be obtained from the primary research methods used. It was the first data collection method to be used and it helped me to contextualise my study within a relevant and informed framework. This method has been used throughout the research process.

2.10 Qualitative Data Analysis

“Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others” (Bodgan and Biklen, 1992:153).

Successful Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) relies a lot on a systematic and valid data collection process, hence the quality of the data is imperative because the researcher relies on the data to make sense of the research (Boeije, 2010). Boeije believes that the main ingredients of QDA are the process of segmenting and reassembling of data. Segmenting is also referred to as unfolding, unravelling, breaking up, separating, disassembling or fragmenting and this process is followed by reassembling of data (2010:77). Reassembling refers to looking for patterns, searching for relationships between the distinguished parts and finding explanations for what is observed (2010:76).

In addition feminist researchers are well-known for using constructivism and interpretivism which are related approaches which steer the researcher towards the outlook of the participant. Constructivism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2004:538). Interpretivism, or the qualitative approach, is a way to gain insights through discovering meanings by improving our comprehension of the whole (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

All interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in isiZulu, tape-reordered, transcribed and translated by me. There are a number of advantages to audio recording the interviews and focus group discussions. It benefits the quality of data, as it allowed me to

focus on the interview or observation without worrying about taking notes. The recording of all questions and answers provided more insights into the subject under scrutiny. It helped provide literal quotes that have been used in this thesis, allowing the reader to judge the relationship between the original data and the researcher's interpretation (Boeije, 2010:72). All transcripts were translated, transcribed and then read in order to establish if all the key and sub-research questions were adequately covered by the responses. After the first phase of the research, gaps were identified and the second phase of the fieldwork research addressed them.

Data continued to be grouped, coded and analysed according to the dominant themes arising from the transcripts and fieldwork notes. The data were analysed using critical ethnographic analysis, qualitative relational comparative analysis and the hermeneutic approach. Hermeneutics is the continual finding of the significance of texts through constant explanation and reinterpretation. Hermeneutic analysis "is the search for meaning and their interconnection in the expression of culture. The method for doing this kind of analysis requires deep involvement with the culture including an intimate familiarity with language, so that the symbolic referents emerge during the study of those expressions as in the study here" (Bernard, 2000:451).

2.11 The Researcher-Participant Relations

"The identity of the researcher cannot be denied and edited out of the research process, as researchers we are raced, classed, gendered, historical beings with positions of difference on a variety of levels: political, religious, social, cultural, linguistic, etc. as researchers we are individuals with diminished or enhanced power which has been entrenched through our positionalities within society. We simultaneously hold multiple identities which react in dialogue with the forces around and within us. We construct our identities in the act of the research process as we negotiate our relationship with the participants with whom we work, including our audience who co-constructs us" (Dhunpath and Samuel, 2009: xi).

In observing the traditional and cultural traits of the hostel as well as the rural area settings, I became a daughter and a sister to the research participants. I referred to older men as '*baba*', meaning father and I referred to older women as '*ma*', meaning mother. I referred to young

women as 'sisi', meaning sister and young men as 'mfethu' or *bhuti* meaning brother. In this kind of a research, these situations and relationships were unavoidable. One way to understand this is that it highlights the social embeddedness of reflective research. It vividly demonstrates the "inescapable *context effects* stemming from the indissoluble connection between interviewer and respondent and from the embeddedness of the interview in a wider field of social relations" (Burawoy, 1998:7).

Indeed, the above description was not always the case; there were times when I was understood as a journalist because I carried or used a tape recorder and diary/file and sometimes a camera. There were times when I was referred to as "somebody from the department" [Housing Department from Municipality] because of being seen or understood as doing something official, the kind of work that the people from 'the department' were supposed to be doing.

On a more general note, the relations between the participants and I were good because there was always mutual respect and most times the participants were interested in talking to me as much as I was interested in talking to them. "Qualitative research therefore acknowledges an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants as well as between the participants and their own experiences and how they have constructed reality based on those experiences. These personal experiences, beliefs and value-laden narratives are biased and subjective, but qualitative research accepts them as true for those who lived through the experiences. The stories, experience and voices of respondents are the mediums through which we explore and understand (know) reality" (Maree, 2007:55).

2.12 Ethical Considerations

I have observed social research ethics in order to avoid the conflict of interests between the participants and myself. Therefore the data was not gathered at the expense of the CRU and rural community.

2.12.1 Harm to Participants

This was by all means prevented; this was also extended into not disturbing participants in their environments. The way the study has been designed ensured that participants were not harmed psychologically, emotionally or physically. “Harm can entail a number of facets: physical harm; harm to participants’ development; loss of self-esteem and stress” (Bryman, 2004:509). Participants were assured of the confidentiality of records. This became a sensitive issue at the hostel because at some stage participants became so comfortable with me that they found themselves saying things that they knew could get them into trouble with the hostel leadership. This required that the identities and records of individuals be kept confidential. I am also aware that “[t]he use of pseudonyms is common recourse, but may not eliminate entirely the possibility of identification” (Bryman, 2004:510).

2.12.2 Informed Consent

This is in many respects the area within social research ethics that is most hotly debated (Bryman, 2004:514). Although I did not conduct covert participant observation, in my daily activities within the hostel environment, I did not always introduce myself as a researcher to the dwellers unless I was communicating with somebody I wanted to interview, or if I wanted to do a focus group discussion or if there was anybody who asked. In the case of informed consent, I always made it clear to the participants that although I had permission to do fieldwork from the hostel management/leadership, each individual still had a right to say yes or no to participating in this research project. There were a few people who did not want to participate in this study because of fear and lack of trust caused by external/internal factors like the high crime rate and the sensitive political situation in the hostel community.

2.12.3 Deception

This occurs when researchers represent their research as something other than what it is (Bryman, 2004:514). I informed all participants of the true academic purposes of the study as well as my true identity as the researcher. Although the question: “how will I or we benefit from participating in this study?” always came up, sometime for personal reasons and sometimes for the benefit of the hostel dwellers as a whole, I insisted on telling the truth,

even though I then stood a chance of being rejected since I was not undertaking a study commissioned by the Municipality or the Department of Housing. These are the institutions which are understood to be capable of bringing positive changes in the lives of the dwellers mainly with regards to accommodation and basic service delivery.

While Bryman (2004) argued that researchers often want to limit participants' understanding of what the research is about; I controversially always wanted to explain as much detail about this study as I could, because I felt that it would be interesting for them as much as it was interesting for me. Indeed, I found that people were always interested in talking about their life histories, their relationships, connections and livelihood struggles except for a few disappointments mentioned below.

2.12.4 Voluntary Participation

This was the norm of the study. I always told participants that participation is voluntary, meaning that although they might have heard about the study through a CRU official, they were not forced to participate. I told participants that they could choose not to answer certain questions on whatever grounds that they felt were justified. At the end of the study, I came to understand that what the research is about, why it is being undertaken, and who is undertaking and financing it plays a big role in the kind of responses that one gets in the total sample population.

2.13 Limitations

Prior to the fieldwork process, I had foreseen my age and gender as possible limitations that could cause barriers in accessing and successfully engaging with the participants. However the changing gender and generational dynamics of the hostel itself proved my anticipation partly wrong. This did not, however, deter me from using males of relevant age as research assistants whenever it was necessary either for the participants' or my comfort.

As a result of what has been in the news about some hostels in KwaZulu-Natal being anti-women wearing trousers, I also decided that I would wear skirts or dresses. This seemed to have worked well, although in one of the initial meetings with the ward councillor to gain

access, when I asked him about this issue, he said that women were allowed to wear trousers and there was nothing to worry about. I discovered that the reality is that women do put on trousers and there are no big problems with it. One only had to be sensitive to the issues of gender and sexuality in order to be able to note the small problems regarding this issue at the hostel.

On the other hand, my gender, age and race can be understood as favourable to the whole research process. For example, the most important information which hostel dwellers are particularly interested in is *ungowakephi-ke wena ntombi/ndondakazi?* meaning ‘daughter, where do you come from?’. This can be interpreted as ‘where is your family originating from?’ The first few times I was asked that question I would respond by saying ‘I am from Inanda’ (nearby peri-urban area) and they would further question me about my family origins. I quickly learnt that the more appropriate response was to say I am from Mtubatuba, which is also in the greater Zululand region, and then later explain that I primarily grew up in the nearby township. It was clear that the area of origin set some common ground between the participant and myself, which was very important in relation to the way our communication and engagements took place.

Additionally, it made sense for me to not wear trousers because that is one of the ways in which the ‘girls from the townships’ can be easily identified and judged. As controversial as this is, there are men, household heads in the townships who do not allow their girl-children to wear trousers. This is just an indication of the dichotomies still being used by hostel dwellers in looking at spaces as bounded units, i.e. hostels vs. townships and rural vs. urban.

2.13.1 Disappointments

After being in the field for more than a year, it was very interesting how *upsetting* it can be to be refused an interview, especially when you purposely requested it. At least three potential participants refused to have an interview with me:

- Ms Molefe is a middle aged woman who now lives in the CRU after moving from a shack in mid-2010. She lives with her children and is from Babanango. What drew my attention to her is that she works from a park home (container) where she has

public phones, *Ilondolo* (laundry), sells cool drinks, snacks and sweets. She works there from 6am to 6pm six days a week. When I lived at the hostel, I used her public phones a couple of times a week and she is the kind of a woman whom after chatting to for five minutes one could get rich information either about this or that, in isiZulu we would say *unezindaba*.

For example, one day I went to make a phone call in the evening of the day when a gunshot had gone off at 2pm. From my room I heard it but did not think much of it especially because it was during day light. Later I heard from her that a guy who lived in our block was shot and killed and it is suspected that it was the second boyfriend of his girlfriend who had shot him. She gave me this information after I asked why he was shot and she said nobody knows and “nobody ever tells anything at the hostel”. Soon after that she gave me all the information I was interested in. Coincidentally, a couple of minutes later a man who was a relative of the deceased came to make a phone call to his family in the rural area reporting the death of the man and he explained that nobody knew at that time what the reason was that he was shot. This is the kind of a life that hostel dwellers live on a daily basis.

Although Ms Molefe refused me an interview saying she was always busy and did not have much to say about the hostel life, we still got along quite well. I saw her on a daily basis and used her public phones often. She mentioned that she really liked me because she used to see me going to church every Sunday. She strongly disliked the idea of youth who did not go to church, especially young women at the hostel.

- Mr Mkhize just like Ms Molefe, lived in the same block as I. He was probably in his forties and is from Mpangeni. The first thing that drew my attention to him was his dress code. He used to use something like pantyhose to cover his head or put on a scarf in his head. He also used to put on peculiar vests that were self-designed in an unusual way; towards the waist he would cut them and then tied knots all around. Secondly he did not seem like a sociable person and that is unusual at the hostel. I observed that he did not often greet people.

Although Mr Mkhize refused me an interview saying he never had time and did not have much to say, we still greeted each other in a friendly way after his refusal.

Xabhashe, is a clan name for Xulu, and Khabazela is a clan name for Mkhize; when we greeted he would say '*ninjani Xabhashe?*' and I would respond by saying '*siyaphila Khabazela, ninjani nina?*'

- Mr Mkhungo has a little table on the pavement of the main road across from Ms Molefe's work space at the hostel where he sells snacks. What drew my attention to him firstly was the fact that he is quite an old man, probably past retirement age. It was easy to note him because there are not a lot of men in that age group in the hostel anymore. Secondly he always had an English novel that he was either carrying or reading. He is an old man, living at the hostel, informally employed and reads an English novel on a daily basis. This interested me. We always saw each other on the road but when I asked for an interview, he politely refused without even asking too many questions. As with the case with all of the people who refuse, they tell you that they do not know anything that they can tell you.

Because I lived with them, I could still gather information from the people who refused me interviews, as with Ms Molefe. Secondly, it was clear that they refused not because they did not have the time as they argued, and not because they did not have anything to say because the interview was about themselves at the hostel. Rather, it could be because 'they did not know me' and did not trust me. Trust is the most important thing at the hostel. Most people at the hostel argued that one never knows his or her enemy, and many people died innocently and unknowingly. Whatever I said to them, they had no reason to believe it, even when they saw me living with them every day. The hostel is really a space of perplexity.

However, by the end of the fifteenth month, I knew that the time for fieldwork was over because the study became uneventful, I had reached and sustained theoretical saturation, and I felt confident about the knowledge of the research sites. The diversity in the targeted sample population also proved to be useful because while both the young and the old might all be coming from the rural areas, mostly to look for employment opportunities, their standpoints towards the struggles tended to differ from one another, which made for interesting observations. This angle could have been lost if the participants were only people who had been in the hostel for more than 20 years, as I had initially intended. Finally, the fact that I am from the surroundings of the fieldwork sites (both KwaMashu and Zululand) and am fluent in

both the language used during fieldwork (isiZulu) as well as the language used in translation, analysis and writing (English) have been bonus points for this study.

2.14 Conclusion

Through adopting “the philosophy of praxis” ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000:429), the relational comparison approach and critical ethnographies, this chapter has attempted to show that the relations between research and theory are anything but simple, separate and direct. By implication, this chapter challenged the idea that the hostel is a place for men, which in South Africa is generally taken as common knowledge. Common sense according to Gramsci is “conceptions about the world which are mostly imposed and absorbed passively from outside or from the past and are accepted and lived uncritically. These conceptions are sometimes in contradiction to one another and they tend to form an incoherent whole” ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000:421). This contribution to the bodies of knowledge will help us to understand the social and spatial engineering of segregation and apartheid which is the subject of the next chapter. In applying Lefebvre’s regressive-progressive approach, the next chapter will take us back in history in order to help us move onwards and forward ([1974]1991). It will show that the unravelling of the causation of the complexity is a complex and involved process. To disentangle it requires nothing short of a profound and wide-ranging study of every intellectual and practical activity ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000:45).

This chapter contributes to Elder’s argument that while women have continuously and successfully claimed more spaces in the hostels, gender issues are claiming more space in literature about the hostels (2003a). The conceptual and theoretical frameworks in the first part of this chapter began to show how perilous it is to remain locked in the ‘traditionally promised comfort of binaries’ because the changes in the hostel are taking a different character; hence some features of it are becoming more vivid than they have been in the past.

*All names have been changed.

CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW: THE WORLD OF RURAL-URBAN CONNECTIONS

3. Introduction

As I have discussed in chapter two, what I try to show here is that “reflexive science has its pay-off, enabling the exploration of broad historical [and geographical] patterns and macrostructures *without* relinquishing either ethnography or science. By ethnography I mean writing about the world from the standpoint of participant observation; by science I mean falsifiable and generalizable explanations of empirical phenomena” (original emphasis) (Burawoy, 1998:6). This quote puts into context the aim of this chapter. Indeed, the story of the hostel cannot be told without considering its history and the South African macrostructure. While the quote justifies the methodology which has been discussed intensely in the previous chapter, it also highlights the importance of situating the study in a particular space-time frame. While the primary purpose of this chapter is to give a historical overview of the hostel, it is also about the significance of changing rural-urban connections which originate from the stubborn survival of migrancy as a key form of livelihoods procurement among large numbers of African working-class people. I will first discuss the labour migrant system because directly or indirectly it gave birth to the hostel and compound system. I will move to discussing the role of apartheid regime and the changes it brought to the country; and the establishment of KwaMashu hostel. I chronologically go on to discussion the penetration of informal settlements in the hostel, and the stirring up of violence at the hostel. Towards the end of the chapter I will discuss the changes brought by the new South Africa. The chapter concludes with the current formation of the hostel.

In this chapter I show that regardless of the abolition of influx control in 1986, the first democratic elections in 1994 and the conversion of the hostel and compound system into Community Residential Units (CRUs) in the post-apartheid era, the survival of rural-urban migration remains a challenge. The migrant labour hostels are estimated to provide accommodation for one million people in South Africa (Thurman, 1997:43) Sitas (1983:245) argued that influx control policies and the hostel and compound system were the fundamental pillars of the migrant labour system in South Africa, from segregation through to the

apartheid era (see Zulu, 1993). Rex (1974) powerfully advocated the idea that the compound, the reserves and the urban location are the systematic and most essential institutions of Southern African labour exploitation. He added that the purpose of the reserve policy was to ensure that the employers were not saddled with unemployment benefits and family support. The reserve was created as an economic and a social system which would supplement waged labour as a means of support for the household in the rural areas (*ibid.*). Controversially, labour migrancy remains one of the key ways in which the majority of the African people make a living today. Hence in this chapter I attempt to trace the way in which this system has evolved and how the large numbers of African people especially from the rural areas are still experiencing its after-effects. I present the CRUs as the current, complex, controversial space-time and process that is partly allowing the rural-urban migration to continue, and causing the reconfigurations to take place and continue but also causing further perplexity in the lives of the migrant workers. Throughout this chapter I show that apartheid as a process manipulated not only spatial relations and processes but also social, sexual and gender relations (see Elder, 2003a).

“The approach taken here may be described as ‘regressive-progressive’. It takes as its starting-point the realities of the present: the forward leap of productive forces, and the new technical and scientific capacity to transform natural space so radically that it threatens nature itself. The effects of this destructive and constructive power are to be felt on all sides; they enter into combinations, often in alarming ways, with the pressures of the world market. ... The production of space, having attained the conceptual and linguistic level, acts retroactively upon the past, disclosing aspects and moments of it hitherto uncomprehended. The past appears in a different light, and hence the process whereby that past becomes the present also takes on another aspect. ... Though it may seem paradoxical at first sight, this method appears on a closer inspection to be fairly sensible. For how could we come to understand a genesis, the genesis of the present, along with the preconditions and processes involved, other than by starting from that present, working our way back to the past and then retracing our steps? Surely this must be the method adopted by any historian economist or sociologist – assuming, of course, that such specialists aspire to any methodology at all. ... The main difficulty arises from the fact that the ‘regressive’ and the ‘progressive’ movements become intertwined both in the exposition and in the research procedure itself. There is a constant risk of the regressive phase telescoping

into the progressive one, so interrupting or obscuring it. The beginning might then appear at the end, and the outcome might emerge at the outset. All of which serves to add an extra level of complexity to the uncovering of those contradictions which derive every historical process forward – and thus (according to Marx) towards its end” (Lefebvre, 1991:65-66).

3.1 The Migrant Labour System in South Africa (1886)

In this chapter, history is as much the object of analytical attention as it is a method of analysis. Taken together, this provides a means for understanding and contributing to the process by which knowledge is produced (Scott, 1988:3). The migrant labour system is one of the few clearly distinguished areas which link urban to rural (Mamdani, 1996). The migrant labour system ensured that Africans were “temporary sojourners” in white urban areas and that the reproduction costs of labour were met in the “reserves” (Thurman, 1997:45). Examining the significance of the migrant labour system in the process of giving a historical and geographical account of the hostels has been a result of “an increased awareness of the importance of studying forms of spatial organisation” of employment (Massey, 1984:3). This framework points us to recognise and appreciate the relations between ‘the spatial’ and the ‘the social’. The spatial organisation of social relations is an inherent and recurring feature throughout this thesis.

“MIGRANT LABOUR is nothing new in South Africa. One hundred years ago, a decade before the birth of the Witwatersrand gold mining industry [in 1886], generations before the evolution of the policy of apartheid, the system whereby men oscillate between their home in some rural area and their place of work was already firmly established as part of the country’s traditional way of life. ... The pattern thus established whereby men continued to live in the rural areas but left their families for several months at a time whilst they went to earn money has continued to the present day” (Wilson, 1972:1-2).

In the 1860s, Indian people began to move from India to South Africa as indentured labour to work in the sugar plantations in Natal.²⁸ In 1866, the first diamond was discovered and by 1874, there were 10 000 Blacks employed in Kimberly. In the 1870s, farmers in the agricultural industry made use of the migrant labour system, recruiting workers wherever they could be found. Half way between Cape Town and Durban farmers also hired migrant labourers although not to the same extent. Sheep shearers from the Ciskei moved through the Eastern Cape, and sheep shearing also expanded to the Free State (*ibid.*). As can be expected, the terms and conditions of the labour migration contract differed, not only from one regime to the other but also regarding different racial groupings, i.e. Indians were allowed to bring their families with them when they came to South Africa, whereas Blacks were not allowed to bring their families when they temporarily migrated from the rural areas to the urban areas of South Africa.

In 1886, the discovery of gold sparked an economic explosion that was to change the face of the country, leading to a large demand for cheap and unskilled labour (Rees, *et. al*, 2009). The gold mining industry provided a model for the country's labour policy, as it became one of the major employers in the mining sector. In 1893, the Chamber of Mines set up a special labour department to organise recruitment from the Transvaal and Mozambique. In 1896, the Rand Native Labour Association (subsequently the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) was formed to co-ordinate the supply of labour. By 1899, gold mines employed about 100 000 Black people. The gold mines employed more non-South Africans than any other industry in the country at that time (Wilson, 1972:3).

The 1913 Native Land Act limited access to land and the imposition of taxes ensured that men were compelled to migrate to urban areas to earn a cash wage (Rees, *et. al*, 2009). The migrant labour system²⁹ gave birth to the hostel and compound system. Migrant workers are a key link in a complex chain of relationships (Mamdani, 1996).

²⁸ "In Durban, residential segregation, insofar as it evolved at all before 1900, was mainly directed against Indians. In 1871 the Durban Town Council adopted a policy of creating separate locations for Indians. Urban segregation was mainly explained in terms of moral panic and racial hysteria, as whites increasingly came to associate the Black urban presence with squalor, disease and crime. Resentment against Indian commercial competition largely explained the segregationist drive. Racial segregation could be in the interests of capital for two main reasons: first in facilitating labour control and second, in releasing land for industrial purposes" (Maylam, 1995:23-26).

²⁹ "Yet, while clearly the existence of migrant labour has an important function in cheapening, controlling and dividing the work force in the foundry, to emphasise how functional migrant labour is or capital is to underplay its contradictory nature" (Webster, 1985:206). Migrant labour performs an economic function. It facilitates

3.2 The Hostel and the Compound System (1923)

The single-sex hostels, where the migrant workers were housed, were tightly controlled by the government of the time. Hostels were primarily for the containment of labour and not for human comfort; they were badly designed and poorly built (Thurman, 1997). The construction of hostels was made possible and maintained through Section 2 of the Native Urban Areas Act 25 of 1945. Since their establishment in 1923, hostels have always been linked to the migrant labour system. A clear distinction was made by the Johannesburg municipality between hostels and compounds at the end of the Second World War. Hostels were declared Bantu areas for the housing of single men or women who worked for more than one employer i.e. they constituted a labour pool of migrants for all employers in a given area, while compounds were only for workers on the gold mines and in essential services. A compound is a kind of a bachelor barracks to which workers retire when off shift to bunk beds in communal dormitories and receive their meals in specially provided communal kitchens. This was to seal off workers from subversive forces which might lead to their trying to form unions to bargain over the price of their labour (Rex, 1974:8; see Wilson, 1972; Mamdani, 1996). Men in compounds generally worked for the same employer and could be more tightly controlled in times of unrest. Hostels and compounds varied enormously in terms of living conditions and the general atmosphere (Wilson, 1972:31).

The organization of a compound may be described as both authoritarian and paternalistic and was definitely not something that maintains the traditional tribal pattern, as some officials argued (Wilson, 1972:10). Wilson argued that the hostel system was formed out of the compound system on the mines. Sitas (1996:237) added that although they differed, hostels can be regarded as an extension of the compound system; the difference was in 'operational

management's control over black workers. It functions to divide workers. These are social and cultural differences between migrants and urban people. These differences coincide with the division of labour in the foundry. Conversely, through hostels, it facilitates communication between them and the union, making trade union organising easier. The large hostels with large numbers of workers with a shared set of grievances generate two processes. Sitas considers these processes irreversible, i.e. public class knowledge and defensive combination processes. Sitas defined class knowledge as the public knowledge that workers get from their experiences as manual workers and residing in the hostels. Defensive combination means that migrants as they enter the workplace, are already combined through the hostel, or as they enter the hostel, are already combined through their origins; as a result, they shared a common set of grievances. The workplace is the space that brings their consciousness to their similar situations, (Webster, 1985:206-211). Sitas's explanation of these processes closely links with Gramsci's ideas of common sense, that everybody is a philosopher capable of critical thought. He held that "everybody is cultured" meaning that everybody is educated, is informed somehow and the process of getting formal education is a way of developing and discipline the awareness which the learner already possesses ([Gramsci, 1916-1935] Forgacs, 2000).

contingencies'. Either way, after many decades, they both continue to be closely tied to migrant labourers, regardless of the many changes that have taken place in South Africa since their establishment.

The hostel was designed to facilitate the control of migrant workers at their place of work; however control quickly became a contested terrain. This terrain in turn has created a complex dialectic between obedience and resistance in the interstices of this institution. It has been shown that Black workers constructed a 'public world' (that is a world of 'seeming obedience' to the system) and a 'private world' (that is a world of Black brotherhood which marked an attempt to both adjust to and defend themselves in this alien world). These worlds and only these allowed Black hostel dwellers to come to terms with the arbitrary impositions of the hostel system, (Gordon, 1978; Sitas, 1983:247; see also Ramphele, 1993).

Both hostels and compounds conformed to a sociological definition of "total institutions" (Goffman, 1961; see Thurman, 1997; Cooke, 1996). A total institution is "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (p.: xv). Some of the features of total institutions are that all aspects of life are conducted at the same place under a single authority. Secondly people do things in groups or batches, along with inmates. Thirdly there is a tight schedule of all daily activities. Finally, all activities of the inmates are designed to fulfil the aims of the institution (p6). From the five groupings³⁰ identified, hostels and compounds were established 'to pursue some work like task'. The hostels during the apartheid era were fully representative of total institutions. However, it is critical to mention that the concept of hostels as total institutions was challenged in many ways by the hostel dwellers who were not passive participants in the apartheid regime. While some of the challenges to the system were presented in a form of social movement unionism against the authorities (see von Holdt, 2003), part of it was

³⁰ Firstly there are institutions established to care for persons felt to be both incapable and harmless; these are the homes for the blind, the aged, the orphaned and the indigent. Secondly, institutions to care for persons felt to be both incapable of looking after themselves and a threat to the community, although unintended, for example mental hospitals. Thirdly, institutions organised to protect the community against what is felt to be intentional danger for example jails and concentration camps. Fourthly institutions established for work purposes, for example colonial compounds and boarding schools. Finally, institutions designed as retreats from the world even while often serving also as training stations for the religious, for example, convents and monasteries (Goffman, 1961:4-5).

through sneaking the opposite sex into the single sex hostels. This sometimes entailed women wearing men's clothes as a disguise.

According to Wentzel (1993), the closed compound system was good for disciplining the migrant workers, reducing costs, preventing theft from the workplace, especially in the mines, preventing drunkenness especially on the weekends and establishing an efficient labour force. In the diamond mining industry, the closed compound system was primarily established "to prevent illicit diamond buying" (Wilson, 1972:2). Migrant workers were sealed-off from contact with the outside world during their employment period and their stay at the hostel (Wilson, 1972; Minnaar, 1993; Mamdani, 1996). They carried out their working lives in compliance with a vision that trapped them in rurality because the authorities wanted to avoid men living in the city as it would "create a large mass of men without local or family ties" (S.A. Native Race Committee cited in Wilson, 1972:2). All efforts were made to subordinate them to a regime of indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996). "The laws criminalised even the most human of impulses like parents and children wanting to be together" (Mamdani, 1996:228). Ramphela (1993) added that there was a constant effort to keep the hostels isolated, anonymous and invisible. Men could live in the hostels as long as they had work in the cities and family members were prohibited from residing in the urban areas. They were only entitled to short-term visits provided they had permits.

3.3 The Commencement of the Apartheid Era (1948)

The apartheid government came to power in 1948 and consolidated and re-informed already existing segregation policies and adopted a system of racial segregation with "independent" African homelands upheld by the influx control and forced removals (Thurman, 197:45).

The infamous section 10 (1) of the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act as amended in 1955 and 1956 provided that no 'native' shall remain for more than 72 hours in an urban proclaimed area unless he or she produces proof in the manner prescribed that: (a) he had since birth, resided continuously in such area; (b) he had worked there continuously for one employer for ten years, or had been there continuously and lawfully for fifteen years and had thereafter continued to reside there, and was not employed outside the area, and while being in the areas has not been sentenced to a fine exceeding 50 pounds or to imprisonment for a

period exceeding six months; or (c) was the wife, unmarried daughter or son under 18 years of age – the age at which he would become liable for the payment of general tax under the Native Taxation and Development Act of 1925 (Act no. 41 of 1925); of any Bantu mentioned in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this subsection and after lawful entry into such prescribed area, ordinarily resided with him; or (d) had been granted a permit to remain by an employment officer appointed to manage a labour bureau in terms of the provisions of paragraph (a) of sub-section (6) of Section 21 term of the Native Labour Regulation Act, 1911 (Act No. 15 of 1911), due regard being had to the availability of accommodation in the Bantu residential areas in the case of work seeker or otherwise by the local authority (Wilson, 1972:221-2; Sitas, 1983:212).

Section 10 was not at first applied to women, but with the extension of the pass laws to women and finally (in Johannesburg from 1959, in Cape Town from 1963)³¹ the requirement that women have permits to be in the prescribed are for more than 72 hours, their entry into the cities was severely tightened. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 signified the crowning of this purpose. This Act required that wives, daughters and children under 18 had to prove that their original entry into towns had been 'lawful', (Sitas, 1983:212). In a discussion that Ari Sitas had with N. Lutie in Johannesburg, March 1981, this is what Lutie had to say "we are all migrants, even we Section Tanners live here by grace and exemption..." (in Sitas, 1983:211). "The spatial organization of society, in other words, is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in both history and politics", (Massey, 1994:4). The Bantu Affairs Administration Act of 1971 restructured the administration of the places of residence of South Africa's labour force.

³¹ The Black (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No 67 of 1952 (commenced 11 July) repealed earlier laws, which differed from province to province, relating to the carrying of passes by Black male workers (e.g. the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911) and instead required *all* Black persons over the age of 16 in *all* provinces to carry a 'reference book' at *all* times. They were required by law to produce the book when requested by any member of the police or by an administrative official. The 'pass' included a photograph, carried details of place of origin, employment record, tax payments, and encounters with the police. (<http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheidlaws/g/No67of52.htm>, accessed January 2012)

3.4 Establishment of KwaMashu Hostel (1958)

“No doubt the ideal world of apartheid would be one in which all native people lived in reserves except during temporary periods when the able-bodied were summoned to live in urban compounds and do labour service. Something like this appears to have been the Ovambo system. But this cannot be simply achieved since the urban migration of families has been going on for a very long time. Moreover, so long as uncultured arrangements can be made for providing the minimum necessary service for the unemployed and the families of workers in the towns, so that this cost does not fall on the employers, there are positive advantages in having a further reserve of labour, including female labour, readily at hand in the urban areas. The existence of a residential community of families and other complex households, however does present certain difficulties to the system. Above all it raises the possibility of community-based political and trade union action. It is, therefore, imperative that the urban migrants should be subject to total control and perpetual scrutiny” (Rex, 1974:12) (original emphasis).

The KwaMashu hostel, established between 1958 and 1960 consisted of large single storey blocks of eight rooms each. Each room housed four residents thus making a total of 32 residents per block. Four men shared a common kitchenette with four cupboards, a table and two bunks which acted as chairs. Each man had his own cupboard, a bed made up of bricks and a concrete cement base as a mattress, a built-in wardrobe made of cement and a lockable wooden door. Four blocks, i.e. 128 men shared a common set of cold showers, toilets and cement washing basins where the occupants washed their pots, cutlery and utensils. The physical set up is such that the blocks are situated in rows where every alternate row houses these elementary amenities located at the corner of every second block. The toilets and washing sinks are situated exactly opposite each other in adjacent blocks. There are four toilets, four showers and two hand washing basins in a block, all within an enclosure. The amenities are generally in a dilapidated state since the official cleaners probably stopped cleaning at the collapse of apartheid, when the services of the Blackjacks were withheld (Zulu, 1993:5).

There were three shopping centres inside the hostel. Each shopping centre comprised a butchery, a grocery shop, tea rooms, a bottle store, a beer hall, a barber shop and there may

have been one or two other small businesses such as a tailor shop or green grocer. With the advent of deregulation a number of informal entrepreneurs have set up shack shop caravans and other structures where they sell various types of commodities including clothing. This has resulted in fierce competition for space and consequently caused a measure of conflict within the hostel (Zulu, 1993:5-6).

According to the hostel dwellers, the highest position at the hostel was the superintendent, who was responsible for the administration and management of the hostel (von Holdt, 2003:13). He had an office at the hostel where resident paid their monthly rental, reported broken water and sewerage pipes and drains needing repairs and contacted the township officials for any business which required bureaucratic attention. Residents started by paying a monthly rent of R 2.50 in the 1980s; this went up to R 4.50 in the early 1990s; to R 13.00 in the mid-1990s and then to R 45.00 in the democratic era. At this point hostel dwellers decided to march and boycott paying rent until negotiations were finalised, which incorporated the presence of CRUs.

Control was exercised through the Administration Board's police force, the infamous 'Blackjacks'. Regular and violent raids were carried out both day and night. Any person found to be in the urban area illegally (without a pass or permit) would be chased away, arrested or deported back to the homelands (Thurman, 1997; Sitas, 1983). Hostels and compounds were normally fenced off from the surrounding township and access was controlled by the municipal police. "The 'Blackjacks' tried control the payment or non-payment of rents and through raids, checked passes and hostel permits. This was an unenviable task as admitted by the administration board and migrants (*ibid.* 253). At the time of my fieldwork, the Blackjacks remained vivid in the memories of the hostel dwellers that had been there long enough. At that time, they were undesirable and disturbing to the hostel dwellers and their visitors, but now they serve as a vantage point to draw differences between the past and the present. As a result of the changes that have taken place, hostel dwellers even wish for the Blackjacks' to return to enforce order, discipline and bring back the identity and image of the single sex hostel.

While a number of authors agree that the 1960s and 1970s were the peak period for the apartheid government (Thurman, 1997) Sitas explains the different things that were taking place and links what was happening in the cities with what was happening in the rural areas.

He argued that this period was marked by control over the conditions of African labour power. "The signs were evident in a multiplicity of areas: in the countryside, one witnessed a rapid decline in subsistence production relative to a rapid population increase. This was aggravated by one of the deadliest droughts in living memory, with widespread outbreaks of typhoid and cholera in KwaZulu and Transkei. Adjacent to the homeland 'border' industrial areas colossal urbanisation was afoot with its resultant slum conditions and poverty" Sitas, 1983:242). "Strains were exacerbated further by popular militancy: hand in hand with the above one witnessed an increasing militancy throughout the social formation. One witnessed the defiance by numerous squatter camps of their 'illegality', that is, their presence in 'white' South Africa, resistance to homeland governments ... (whether from trade unions or opposition chiefs) ... violence in schools, bus boycotts, resistance to removals, faction fights over scarcer and scarcer productive land holdings and finally a generalised migrant worker militancy in the cities and the 'border' areas. It was a crisis piercing the structures of Apartheid" (Sitas, 1983:243). "Conditions in the rural areas created a massive exodus of people a few times encouraged by hostel workers, to come and seek their fortune in the cities illegally. Part of the life of hostel inmates became a struggle for accommodation and the job-hunting of their kinfolk" (Sitas, 1983:262).

While KwaMashu hostel might have been the only hostel in Durban which had married quarters, it was not the only one in South Africa. For example, "[b]y law, the gold mines were until 1969 allowed to provide family housing for not more than 3% of the black labour force excluding 'foreign natives'. Practically it is only 1% which was eligible because the proportion of the South African was not more than one-third of the total" (Wilson, 1972:9). Between 1969 and 1970, a circular was sent out by the local Bantu Affairs Commissioner to the effect that "children were no longer allowed to stay in the married quarters of the workers" (*ibid.*). The married quarters in KwaMashu were not for the permanent accommodation of women and children. Married men were allowed to have their wives visit them at the hostel but they could only be accommodated in the married quarters which men had to apply for before the arrival of the wife. A wife could stay for a maximum of 14 days and then she had to go back to the rural areas. The married quarters are famously known by the migrant workers as '*kofotin*' or '*ko-14*'. '*ko*' means 'at' and 14 refers to the maximum number of days that a man could spend with his wife there. On the other hand, they are famously known by the people from KwaMashu Township as '*emadabulini*'. In this case, '*ema*' means 'at' and '*dabul*' is a borrowed isiZulu version of 'double'. This basically means

double houses because these four roomed houses are joined together. Married quarters are directly behind the main hostel buildings, across the main road. Geographically and according to the KwaMashu sections' demarcation, the hostel is in section A of KwaMashu and the married quarters are in section E. Essentially the whole of KwaMashu section A is composed of the hostel, while section E is primarily a township. A lot of people who move from the hostel to seek accommodation in the township go to either E or F section which is within walking distance of the hostel. There are backrooms available for rent from R150 to R600 per month.

3.5 Informal Settlements at the Hostel (1980s)

“The hostel has almost ceased to cater for single sex accommodation as the number of womenfolk residing with men has increased dramatically. This is a source of ill-feelings from a number of residents who claim that this is an abrogation of moral standards and an encroachment on their privacy. This and the spiralling of the informal sector have contributed greatly to the increase in the number of informal structures within the hostel. In absolute numbers there may be more informal structures than the formal blocks. Spatially, the hostel appears overcrowded and aesthetically objectionable. There is a terrible stink from the ablution blocks and the uncollected garbage which spreads all over within the premises contributes to this poor state of affairs” (Zulu, 1993:6).

The abolition of influx control in 1986 had a tremendous effect on the hostels (Sitas, 1996) and (Segal, 1991). One was the “total disregard of the hostel and their [municipal] services”. In one of the focus group discussions held in the hostel with men who have lived in the hostels since the apartheid era, hostel dwellers referred to the biblical context of the children of Israel, arguing that “it was better in Egypt” (Focus Group Discussion March 2009). This means that it was better during the apartheid era than at present at the hostel. They argued that “at least there was basic service delivery and there was no high crime and unemployment rate like in the democratic era” (*ibid.*). Those who are still against the presence of women in the hostels further argued that all the social ills in the hostels are exacerbated by the presence of women and children who started flowing in especially since 1986. Interestingly, most of the women participants subscribed to this perception as well.

Secondly, the abolition of influx control changed the parameters of migrancy. This included the emptying of hostels followed by overcrowding as migrants moved out to seek different

forms of accommodation (be it in shacks or in townships), and women and children came in numbers (Sitas, 1996; see also Ngcongco, *et al*, 2006). The concept of *homeboy* strengthened regional positioning (see Sitas, 1996; James, 1999). Livelihoods procurement through informal sector activities mushroomed. Sitas (1996) noted that the same informal sector activities are still popular today in the hostels, including “taxis, welding shops, fresh fruit and meat vending, herbalist outlets, and a trade in dagga, weapons and guns” (1996:242). However, the socio-economic challenges took a somewhat different shape, including high levels of gender-based violence, compared to the political violence which continued throughout the early 1990s and for some months after the 1994 elections (Sitas, 2004), high internal crime rates, increased unemployment rates, etc., as well as the political landscape of the hostel as will be seen in chapter five.

Thirdly the most important point is that informal settlements were never fully eradicated under the apartheid regime. Instead, according to Hindson and McCarthy (1994) they were reduced to small hidden pockets in the 1960s. Informal settlements have been said to be the fastest growing component of the population in KwaZulu Natal (*ibid.* see also Hunter, 2006). Informal settlements are defined by Hindson and McCarthy (1994:1) as dense settlements comprising communities housed in self-constructed shelters under conditions of informal or traditional land tenure. This term covers a range of different kinds of settlements in terms of shelter type ranging from settlements built from metal scrap, plastic, mud, planks, cardboards, etc., forms of informal tenure, and degrees of official recognition in the rural-urban spectrum. The functional roles of settlements change with time and within the hostel setting. Some people use them only as sleeping spaces, since they spend their whole day at work and when they come back from work they spend a lot of time with their friends in the hostel block houses. Some do not even cook and or dine in their informal settlements but do that in the hostel block houses. Some use informal settlements as trading spots. Most of the businesses found in the hostels are run from informal settlements. Some use the informal settlements as ‘hotels’ where they spend special days entertaining their visiting partners. The period that the partners visit can vary from just one day or night to a whole month.

In the case of informal settlements used as hotels, a hostel dweller living in a hostel block would either own an informal dwelling/settlement or he ask a person from his social network to allow him some time with his partner in the informal settlement. In this case the length of the stay would be highly influenced by the ownership of the informal settlement and/or the

kind (friend, brother, *umkhaya*³²) and level (strong or weak) of relations that exist between the person who owns the informal settlement and the person who needs to use the room. This was also substantiated by the fact that some men from the hostel block houses do not allow women to spend a night in their room. Therefore if a man who lives with three more others in a hostel is expecting a female visitor, he needs to *rent*³³ an informal settlement where he can spend time with his partner.

Informal settlements began mushrooming with the abolition of influx control³⁴. Families in the townships started enlarging to an uncontrollable extent because of rural-urban migration. Hence people started moving out to the informal settlements. Hostels were overcrowded and this also led to people building their own little informal homes close to the hostels. More people, young and old, men and women, found reasons to migrate from the rural areas to the urban areas. Being in an informal settlement can basically be understood as having moved from one area of insecurity to another space full of insecurities. Some of the reasons why people move to informal settlements are the search of safety and security from all forms of violence; shelter from displacement and dislocation; in search of food security, and sometimes in search of own space and privacy.

One of the reasons why I consider hostels and informal settlements as spaces of perplexities, specifically on the issue of informal settlements, is that one might find that a person leaves the rural area where they could always rely on food from a backyard garden, and comes to the urban areas to look for work, believing that is a better option, only to later realise that their situation gets worse. One can run away from a particular area because of violence only to find that informal settlements can be the most unsafe spaces in comparison with the rural or the urban areas (see Hunter, 2006).

³² 'Homeboy' or home girl

³³ Renting means borrowing as exchanges are hardly ever monetary.

³⁴ With the lifting of influx control in South Africa, one would expect that the pattern of temporary migration would be replaced by permanent migration, particularly to urban areas, and that migrants' ties to their households of origin would have weakened considerably. However, Posel and Casale (2003:460) did not find strong empirical evidence to support this. In fact, the number of households with at least one labour migrant as a household member increased slightly between 1993 and 1999. This basically confirms the continuous rural-urban migration even after the death of apartheid regime.

Overcrowding is bad and privacy is scarce at the hostel (Thurman, 1997). Depending on how one defines 'privacy', some people move away from hostel blocks to live in informal settlements because 'there is more privacy'. But on the other hand, informal settlements are generally very close to each other, especially at the hostel; one can hear all kinds of sounds and noises from neighbouring settlements. This is because of the proximity but also the material that is normally used to build the settlements. Generally there is almost nothing that one can do without one's neighbour knowing about it. What is significant to note is that as people move from one location to another, what they are actually looking for are improved conditions and better opportunities. Informal settlements always present a good opportunity for small traders who stock loose candles, paraffin, cheap tobacco, etc. (see Makhathini in Hindson and McCarthy, 1994); they also extend one's social network structures.

This study does not by any means claim that conditions in informal settlements are all harsh and homogenous' rather, it acknowledges the complex and diverse picture being painted in informal settlements and the social relations existing in. The diversity in income groups is not only apparent in the hostels but also within the informal settlements. It also acknowledges the strategic and well positioned spaces of informal settlements in terms of the opportunities offered by the surrounding environment.

In the mid-1980s, migrants started to build *imijondolo* for all sorts of reasons but primarily to accommodate their wives and/or partners who started breaking the rules by coming to the single sex hostels. The few women who have been at the hostel since the early-1980s related how they had to wear men's clothes to disguise themselves in order not to be caught by the Blackjacks (Interview with Mrs Phindile Shangase, 2009 and Ms Nonhle Kheswa, 2011). Shacks started to be erected then and have multiplied in the past years. Almost every participant in this research mentioned that women are the reason for the presence of shacks. They also claimed that there are more women than men living in the hostels. While Hindson and McCarthy (1994) argued that women outnumber men in informal settlements, the participants argued that women outnumber men at the KwaMashu hostel. For the purposes of this study, this can be understood as two different sides of the same coin; whether one calls it the hostel or informal settlements, at the end of the day it is the same thing, which can also be referred to as CRUs.

Between the establishment of the hostel and the abolition of influx control, unofficially the discretion resided with men to decide whether they wanted a woman in their space or not. Women could not invite each other to the hostel space when they did not have space that belonged to them. When shacks were first built, it was either by a man who was already preparing for the coming of his wife or where the wife was already living with the men in the block house as an *imbamba*³⁵ or less. If a man had a wife or partner coming to visit at the hostel before the mushrooming of the shacks, he would either let his wife/partner sleep on the kitchen floor while he slept on his concrete bed in the bedroom together with other the three or more men who all slept in their concrete beds. Otherwise he would share his bed with his wife in the bedroom which he shared with three or more other men. In this case, they would use some material, for example a bed sheet or curtain, to cover the corner from which their bed was built. This material covering them was called *umdiyadiya*³⁶. It was up to a couple what activities took place behind that curtain.

When it came to building a shack, sometimes a woman would decide to ask for permission from her partner to build a shack near the block house where her partner lived. Her partner would in turn ask for permission from his roommates for his wife could put up a shack close to their room. On being granted permission, the woman would then build a shack. Initially in most cases, these shacks were only used for sleeping purposes but that quickly changed. While women and men formerly used the common bathrooms and common kitchenettes, they started doing most if not everything from the shack. Women found the shacks important for bathroom purposes, particularly when they had decided to come and live on a full time basis with their partner at the hostel.

There are times when a man builds a shack while not living with his partner permanently. Some men live in informal settlements with their wives, partners, or girlfriends, while some men live by themselves but often have girlfriends or wives to visit. Some men claimed that they moved out of the hostel blocks because they wanted privacy, although they do not have full-time live-in partners. Some argued that they moved out to enable them to accumulate their own possessions since it is impossible to do this when living in a block house. In a block

³⁵ *Imbamba* is a person who relies on the other(s) person mostly for a livelihood. So in the case of the *imbamba* at the hostel, it would be somebody who does not have a room of his own and who also would not have a job, so he would be sharing resources with another person(s).

³⁶ *Umdiyadiya* is a curtain that was used by men during the apartheid era to cover/hide themselves in their beds when they had their partners visiting. The curtain only covered his side of the bed so that the other people in the room could not see what happens behind it.

house one is forced to live in a concrete bed that cannot be moved. Even if a man can afford to buy his own bed, there is no space to put a bed or anything else except a small fridge and two-plate stove in the kitchenette.

Mr Sibonelo Lukhozi is in his late thirties and has two wives who both live in the rural areas. He owns a shack that he built. He would not like either of his wives to come and live at the hostel but he invites them every once in a while to come and visit him at the hostel. They never come at the same time. The basic understanding between the three of them is that he needs to invite them before they can come to visit him. I was lucky to be able to interview all three of them at different time and spaces. I interviewed Mr Sibonelo Lukhozi first. He works as a security guard. One of the many times I visited him in his block house he had his second wife visiting him and I asked to interview her. They both agreed. She was in the shack and that is the space she sticks to because she felt “the hostel was full of men” (Interview with Sophie, MaZulu Lukhozi, 2009).

When I conducted my fieldwork in the rural areas I interviewed his older wife. The three of them basically had similar answers about their relationship with the hostel. Firstly, that the hostel is a place for men. Secondly they would not like to live in a hostel and it is only people who work who should live there. Thirdly, they cannot come to the hostel without being invited by Mr Sibonelo Lukhozi. The maximum time that they can visit the hostel is one month. The importance of one month is that Mr Sibonelo Lukhozi gets paid monthly and it is important that they come after he gets paid and also leave after he got paid so that they can always have enough busfare as well as money to take with them.

My research data has shown that most men who live in the hostels are not open to living with women in the hostel, regardless of the fact that women started moving into the hostels even before the repeal of the influx control policies of the apartheid past. Of course, the migration of women to the cities and to the hostels specifically accelerated after the relaxation of influx control. Ramphela noted a number of reasons why it was not easy for men to welcome and accept the presence of women. Generally she argued that it is not because hostel dwellers were not ‘gender conscious’ but there was the issue of taking risks to change the well-established and familiar situation (1993).

Firstly, the attitudes of women and where their place is were in conflict with the idea. African men's perspective of women is that of superior vs. inferior, so they would not want anything that would challenge that perspective in any way. Men often said that a hostel is not a woman's place; her place is in the rural areas, *ukwakha umuzi*, (to build a homestead) which is a process that involves a lot of responsibilities, including doing the household chores, and taking care of the children, the in-laws, the livestock the land, etc. This attitude can be associated with what Shefer *et al.*, called *[h]ostile sexism* which involves the belief that women are inferior and that they are threatening to take over men's rightful dominant place, while *[b]enevolent sexism*, emphasises that women are special beings to be cherished and protected (original emphasis) (2008:159)³⁷. "Culture was and still is used as a resource by some African men in the hostels to justify the undesirability of women living in the urban areas" (Ramphela, 1993:111). Women's presence in the hostels threatens the legitimacy of the traditional male authority structures (see Elder, 2003). Secondly, Ramphela argued that this denial was a desperate strategy "to symbolically protect 'men's spaces' from pollution by the intrusion of women" (p.111).

When I asked the ANC councillor about his views on the presence of informal settlements in the hostel he said:

If you look at KwaMashu as a township, it does not have *imijondolo*; we prevented *imijondolo* to erupt even in places that are closer to our township. While there are many open spots here at KwaMashu where people could build *imijondolo*, but you will not find them. When you go Umlazi Township, you will find *imijondolo*. Every open land at Umlazi you will find *imijondolo* and when you go to the [KwaMashu] hostel, you will find the same thing. This did not occur on its own. Because I was here, I was there when we made the decision that we did not want *imijondolo* KwaMashu. Every time they started building them, we demolished them. We had this idea that we wanted KwaMashu to be a nice and clean Township. We were young but we were focused. We were young and we were activists. We took a sober decision that we do not want *imijondolo* KwaMashu. And that became a reality. There is an area called *Isolezwe*³⁸, it is now full of RDP houses, before that, they had started building *imijondolo* and we made them demolish them. In Thembalihle they had built them and we made them demolish them. There is an area called Lovezone, they had built them and we made them demolish them. We did the same thing in all the spots. I want to explain something about the hostel and the Siyanda area. The Siyanda area is located near the hostel. The reason why there is *imijondolo* at Siyanda is because when we tried making them demolish them, there was this thing that we were

³⁷ It is possible for a single individual to endorse both of these seemingly contradictory views about women. Men who score high in both kinds of sexism are termed *ambivalent sexists* and have polarised beliefs about women.... On the hostile sexism scale, South African men had one of the highest scores... On the benevolent sexism measure, South African men had the third highest mean score (Shefer *et al.*, 2008:159).

³⁸ For the purposes of this section, *Isolezwe* does not refer to the local isiZulu newspaper.

attacking them as IFP since we were ANC activists. We did not want that because we were the champions of peace. We knew very well that there was nothing that we could gain through violence. So, the reason there is *imijondolo* at Siyanda is because those people carried that mentality that they were IFP and always against ANC. We could not get inside and stop them because indeed it was an IFP stronghold. They so built them. But *imijondolo* mainly developed at the hostel towards 1999 national elections. We saw that as a political strategy for the IFP, *iTheku* [eThekweni] as a region was seen as dominant of ANC, so since the KwaZulu rural areas were a stronghold for the IFP, in order for them to cement themselves in this area, they erected lots of *imijondolo*. Many people from the rural areas moved to those *imijondolo*. *Imijondolo* started mushrooming in an unprecedented way at the hostel. So it is a cause for concern because it was not really needed but it was a political decision of that time. But now it has become our [ANC] problem, firstly, there is a high crime rate because of *imijondolo*. Secondly, it is not difficult to develop the hostel because of *imijondolo*. Every time a new structure needs to be erected, some informal settlements need to be demolished. In order for the infrastructure (sanitation, electricity, etc) to be put in place because what existed is not now enough for the hostel dwellers, *imijondolo* needs to be demolished. They are always on the way (hindrance) for development. This becomes a challenge for the government because it can't remove somebody from somewhere (space) and not give him or her alternative place to reside. Firstly, this delay the way we would like see the development at the hostel. Secondly, the police cannot properly function as the presence of *imijondolo* prevents them to drive around either patrolling or running after *isigebengu*. The lack of proper street lights and proximity of *imijondolo* compromises their own safety. This is a huge setback for our society. This is also a bigger challenge for us as the municipality because according to the Millennium Development Goals as agreed in the United Nations by 2014. So, we are also aim that we would have finished demolishing all the *imijondolo* at the hostel (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2011).

From this excerpt, we get a different view of the way the different parties comprehend the reasons for the presence of informal settlements at the hostel. It is not only the KwaMashu hostel that has been infiltrated by informal settlements. Thurman argued that women started moving into the LaGuNya³⁹ hostels as early as the late 1960s, often slipping into the buildings at night and leaving before dawn to escape the vigilance of the security forces. She further notes that despite their long-term presence, the status and rights accorded to them are still low, with informal rules serving to ensure that they have fewer rights than men. Indeed, there is a tendency towards patriarchal hierarchy in the allocation of bed spaces and male domination of the committees (1997:59). The views of the ANC councillor above resonates with Sitas (2004:832) observation that, "Inkatha's 'counter-mobilization' to check the rise of an alternative movement in the province started in 1985". 1985 is a symbolical year for the movement of people, especially women, because it is just one year before the official abolition of influx control. The relaxation of these controls allowed the influx of women into

³⁹ Three African townships of Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu collectively known as "LaGuNya"

the hostel, which in the above extract; the ANC Councillor argued was exacerbated just before the 1999 elections. Whether it was actually 1985 or 1999, these views agree that it was political strategy to wrestle with the ANC.

3.6 Violence at the Hostels (late 1980s-1995)

“Violence, for Lefebvre, is unavoidable in radical struggle. Breaking things up, making nonsense out of meaning (and meaning out of nonsense) throwing bricks through windows, driving tractors into buildings, burning cars, ‘daubing graffiti on walls-all are justifiable responses to state repression and corporate injustice, to the ‘latent violence’ of power. Hence they are legitimate forms of ‘counterviolence’. In this sense, violence expresses what Lefebvre calls a ‘lag’ between ‘peaceful coexistence’ and ‘stagnating social relations’, symptomatic of ‘new contradictions super-imposed on older contradictions that were veiled, blurred, reduced, but never resolved’” (Merrifield, 2006:72-73). Lefebvre sees a certain political purchase in slightly mad destructive behaviour, in senseless acts of beauty - as long as they don’t degenerate into “the ontology of unconditional spontaneity,” into “metaphysics of violence” (pp. 73-74). Reliance only on violence, he concludes, leads to a “rebirth of a tragic consciousness” (p. 74) antithetical to the dialectic of becoming. Consequently, serious concern with contestation, spontaneity, and violence requires at the same time a serious delineation of spontaneity and violence. Yet this needs to be done in the name of theory, “which pure spontaneity tends to ignore” (p. 74), (Merrifield, 2006:5-32).

There have been times in history when hostels have been closely and largely associated with violence, political related violence, and dramatic confrontations involving strikes, riots and revolts. As a result, it seemed that every other study on the hostels was about violence in the early 1990s (see Elder, 2003; Mamdani, 1996; Sitas, 1996, 1983; Zulu, 1993; Minnaar, 1993; Goldstone Commission Report, 1993; Segal, 1991; Delius, 1990; Injobo Nebandla, 2005). Different researchers came up with similar but different explanations for the violence that took place in the hostels. For example, most of the above mentioned authors argued that violence was used as a way of drawing attention to the structural violence of the conditions of their lives; it was a way of resisting the marginalisation. This violence, it was argued, was

between the hostel dwellers, informal settlers⁴⁰ and the township residents as well as among hostel dwellers themselves. After the outbreak of violence in the hostels, it seemed like each hostel was representative of a particular political party, which exacerbated violence as it emphasised divisions along the lines of ethnicity. For example, KwaMashu hostel is dominated by isiZulu speakers and was always known to be an IFP stronghold. Minnaar (1993:83) argued that since a meeting that took place in 1990 at Ulundi, KwaMashu hostel, along with other IFP strongholds outlawed the selling [and wearing] of ANC T-shirts from hostel premises; expelled all ANC supporting comrades from the hostel; pressurised business persons operating within the hostel premises to become members of the IFP; and exerted pressure on hostel dwellers to attend all IFP meetings.

What most of the studies on hostels and violence dismally failed to do was to show how the violence on the early 1990s was as political as it was gendered (see Elder, 2003b). Gender does not come secondarily to politics but these are both interwoven and occur simultaneously as a result of the multiplicity in/of space. It is also important to note that political violence in hostels erupted just after the large influx of women from rural areas to the hostels, and the release of Nelson Mandela in early 1990 gave the IFP dominated hostels, i.e. KwaMashu all the more reason to resort to violence. In addition, intergenerational differences and clashes were not static. Older hostel dwellers were regarded as IFP supporters in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province), while the younger township youth were ANC supporters. Divisions between the ANC and IFP as well as Zulu and Xhosa ethnicities were orchestrated and maintained by the apartheid government through the 'divide and rule' system (Mamdani, 1996). Ramphela (1993) described hostels as "spaces full of politics and ideologies".

The politico-socio-economic changes currently taking place at the hostels are one of the reasons why I have come to describe them as spaces of perpetual perplexity. The next three short stories will show how political and gendered violence continues at the KwaMashu hostel up until today:

A group of young women who live in an informal settlement within the KwaMashu hostel related a very interesting story to me in 2009 about political and gendered violence in the

⁴⁰ It is however important to note that during the first part of apartheid epoch, informal settlements were not as integrated with the hostels as they are now (see Slums Act 1979; Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951).

hostel. In total, they have all been living there for less than two years. In one of our conversations they told me that they had witnessed a very brutal act by a group of hostel dwellers when they threw out a young woman, who resided in an informal settlement within the hostel. She was known to be an ANC supporter, so after a brief caucus meeting between the dwellers, they all went to her room and asked her to vacate within few minutes if she did not want to die inside her room. Apparently this happened in the late evening and this woman had to leave while her stuff was being thrown out of her room by the hostel dwellers.

One of the research participants related that although she was not an IFP supporter, she did have the membership card as expected. One day when attending a community youth meeting in 2008, she was nominated to be one of the organisers (*abagqugquzeli*) of the political party and this meant going around pulling people out of their rooms (hostels and informal settlements) to attend community/political meetings and rallies. If they refused to come out, they would be beaten with a sjambok (Interview with Ms Londiwe Mgaga, 21 July 2009).

At the beginning of the development process, hostel dwellers argued that it is important to have an IFP membership card in order to be recognised or to qualify for certain kinds of services, i.e. allocation to the CRU. My observations proved that although this is true⁴¹, it is not always the case for everybody.

As a result of the high levels of violence said to be caused by the hostel dwellers, people started coming up with a number of solutions which they believed could solve the problem. Some argued that hostels should be demolished; some argued that they should be converted into family housing⁴², while some believed that fencing hostels would solve the problem. Olivier however stated that the problem was too complex to be solved by *ad hoc* solutions (Minnaar, 1993: iii). Today it has become clear that most if not all of suggestions put forward during apartheid to solve the problems with the hostels have not done so; instead they have reconfigured them and they manifest in different ways. The hostels have turned out to be something that not even the hostel dwellers imagined or hoped for. For example, male hostel dwellers argued against the presence of women and children in the hostel because they said

⁴¹ See story of Phili Ngcobo and her husband chapter 4.

⁴² This was also proposed as a way of preventing disease in migrant miners, i.e. HIV infection, TB, etc. (see Rees, *et al*, 2009). For migration and the spread of HIV, see (Lurie, *et al*, 1997).

that would weaken their links with the rural areas (see Elder, 2003b), but my research has shown that this has not been the case.⁴³

3.7 The New South Africa (1994) and the Community Residential Units (2004/2006)

“The ‘new’ South Africa did not, of course, start in 1994. The Constitution enshrined the principles of non-racialism and of equity, but before the 1994 elections and before the Constitution was finalised, the vision for social and economic programmes for addressing the legacy of apartheid found expression in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP had its roots in the Freedom Charter of the 1950s. It had a strongly redistributive intent, committing itself to the delivery of basic infrastructure to previously excluded groups as an intrinsic part of economic policy in post-apartheid South Africa. Alongside a programme of land distribution were policies for free primary healthcare, free education, a commitment to early childhood development (ECD) and adult basic education and training [(ABET)], and a housing subsidy for the poor. There was also a commitment to provide affordable water, electricity and telecommunications to rural and urban areas” (Lund, 2008:1).

The CRU is an important programme which is one of the government’s initiatives to reverse the apartheid past. Community Residential Units are former single- sex hostels. The Policy Framework and Implementation Guidelines for the Community Residential Units (CRU) Programme was approved with effect from 01 December 2006. The objective of the CRU Programme is to assist low income persons and households earning below R3500 per month, who are not accommodated in the formal private rental and social housing market. The Programme seeks to bridge the divide between social housing and lower income markets which posed a significant problem (Department of Housing, 2006). The new post-1994 dispensation aimed to decisively address the legacy of the compound and hostel systems. The transformation of such places was brought about under the ambit of the National Housing Policy. Therefore, the CRU Programme is complementary to and runs parallel to the National Social Housing Programme, but serves a different target market. The CRU Programme replaces the National Redevelopment Programme, which was announced by government in

⁴³ Turning single sex hostels into CRUs was largely seen by scholars as a solution to reduce not only violence in but also STD transmission, (see Lurie, *et al*, (1997).

1991 and the proposed Affordable Rental Housing Programme. The National Hostels Redevelopment Programme was “meant to guide and support the upgrading of public hostels” (Thurman, 1997). The CRU Programme provides a variety of accommodation options in order to facilitate and address access by the “target market” and to meet the demands and needs of this market. It claims to support the transition of individuals and households from informal and inadequate housing into the formal housing market (Department of Housing, 2006).

The CRU⁴⁴ is regarded as part of the governments’ poverty alleviation strategy. The target markets are existing residents, displaced persons (i.e. informal settlement upgrading and evictions); new applicants and qualifying indigent groups. Post-1994 newly developed public residential accommodations are owned by Provincial Housing Departments and Municipalities. CRU housing stock remains in public ownership and cannot be sold or transferred to individual residents. Hostels and accommodation that is being used to accommodate public sector employees do not form part of the CRU programme. Rent⁴⁵ setting is supposed to be conducted in a manner which ensures that operating costs are recovered, whilst affordability for the target market is ensured (Department of Housing, 2006). In the policy documents, the target market is set at people who earn R3500 per month or less.

The principles of the CRU programme are to facilitate communication and participation of residents throughout the process; provide a variety of rental housing options; ensure that equity is part of the programme; provide rental options for low income persons and households and ensure long-term rental charge structures. The Department of Housing argued that a range of issues that need to be resolved; these include affordability, rent collection, the target market, historical issues, stock condition, maintenance, property management and alignment with other policies (*ibid.*). The CRU programme does not only focus on the former single-sex public hostels, but also on grey hostels (have both private and public ownership); and public housing stock that forms part of the Enhanced Extended Discounted Benefit

⁴⁴ <http://www.housing.gov.za/Content/CRU/Home.htm> accessed on 28 October 2009

⁴⁵ A typical example of rental calculation is as follows: Operating budget p.a. = R10 000; Total m2 of housing stock = 1000m2; Rental rate charged m2= R10/m2; A unit of 40m2 will therefore pay a rent of R 400/month; R100/week, R15/day; Deductions and premiums may be applied to this rental. Water and electricity is collected through a prepaid system and flow-control, accessed on 28 October 2009 from http://ftp.shf.org.za/stock_hostels.pdf

Scheme (EEDBS), but which cannot be transferred to individual ownership. This excludes free-standing units and post-1994 newly developed public housing stock (Erasibo, 2008). There are three kinds of hostels: private compounds attached to specific places of work; public hostels owned by provincial or local authorities which offer accommodation to workers from a range of industries; and 'grey sector' hostels, where the structure is owned by private companies and the land by the local authority. The public and grey sector hostels are generally situated in townships (Thurman, 1997:43).

It is very interesting to note that in the 2004-7 strategic plan, the first three key focus areas of the KwaZulu-Natal Housing Department are the eradication of slums in KwaZulu-Natal in the next six years; accelerating housing delivery in rural areas; and accelerating the hostel re-development and upgrade programme, the first two being regarded as national priorities. What is intriguing is the inter-linkages and intertwinements that exist between these three areas, and how they all directly and indirectly relate to hostels and hostel dwellers as well as their rural-urban connections⁴⁶. The Minister of Housing made the point that they would strike a balance between quality and quantity as well as working between, in and through the first and the second economy with regards to the key priority issues. Again, those are the very same issues (quality and quantity) that become problematic when it comes to dealing with the above mentioned priority issues. The way these issues are dealt with, especially by an important body such as the government has very significant implications for society at large.⁴⁷

While the concept of hostels has always meant long periods of separation from stable family life, the CRU concept has not yet been able to fully undo that understanding as well as the practice.⁴⁸ According to Minnaar (1993), and Ramphele, (1993), the proposal to convert and upgrade hostels into family housing originated in the mid-1980s. Since that time, most of the

⁴⁶ The official policy discourse does not seem to recognize the on-going importance and implications of rural-urban migration; instead it assumes and seeks to cater for nuclear families who have moved from the rural to the urban areas.

⁴⁷ "The cost of demolishing and rebuilding defective RDP houses has shot up to R1.3 billion after a national housing audit uncovered shoddily built homes in every province... This figure amounts to 10 percent of [Human Settlements' Minister Tokyo] Sexwale's total budget allocation for this year (17 November 2009, page 2 in Mercury Newspaper) accessed on 10 December 2009 from <http://www.kznhousing.gov.za/Portals/0/docs/publications/clippings/The%20Mercury%2017%20November%202009%20page%202.pdf>

⁴⁸ Although many of the legal trappings of apartheid have been abolished, it effectively still prevails in township and hostel life (Pityana and Orkin, 1992:30).

hostel dwellers from around the country have not been happy with this proposal. It also met with resistance from the white local authorities, which made it hard to implement the policy as proposed (Minnaar, 1993:35). Whereas there are data available to show why the hostel dwellers were against the conversion of the hostels into CRU⁴⁹, there are no explanations for why the white authorities opposed this proposal in the late 1980s.

While the proponents of the programme were interested in the broader scale and changing the apartheid structures and institutions, the migrants were more interested in their well-established social relations and ways of survival, including maintaining the powers invested to them as male heads of their families and as breadwinners. Ramphela correctly argued that “merely erecting family housing units to replace existing hostels will not necessarily change the nature of power relationships between those involved” (1993:123). Such a proposal would have negative acknowledged and unacknowledged effects in their social relations.

Although male migrants wanted freedom, they did not want their wives to come and live with them in the cities. While they wanted privacy, this was not necessarily in order to permanently accommodate their wives and children. Although they wanted a better life, they did not want a life that would displace their wives and children as well as challenge their dominance. ‘Freedom’ and ‘independence’ are some of the reasons most of the male migrants mentioned as the reasons why they liked to live in the hostel. It is important to note that these concepts (freedom and independence) were uttered not from a political perspective but from a socio-economic perspective. The analysis of this perspective in context shows that the presence of women and children is understood by men as taking away their freedom and the independence while they are in the hostels.

Ramphela (1993) suggested that the reason for migrant workers do not accept the proposal to change the hostels into family units is a reflection of the way they have internalised the hostel life. Her argument is probably true to a certain extent, but in addition, it can be argued that hostel dwellers were not given the relevant if any platform as well as adequate time to engage with this proposal. Although it was mainly the liberation movement which made this proposal, the way it communicated this proposal to the hostel dwellers was not adequate. On the other hand, some hostel dwellers argued against the CRU programme because they felt

⁴⁹ Thurman (1997:59) seems to be the only author who says “the calls for conversion originally came from the [hostel] residents”.

that the family units to be built would not cater for the size of African households, especially for those men involved in polygamous relationships. In addition, converting to CRU raised the spectre of privatising the hostels, which would inevitably mean paying much higher rent. Some rejected the idea of CRU solely because they strongly believed that a woman's place is in the rural areas. Hunter (2006:300) argued that the "opposition to new notions of mutual respect and universal rights may have more to do with attempts to preserve gendered and generational hierarchies".

Migrants further argued that CRU would not work because of the differences that exist between rural and urban areas' ways of life. They did not want their wives and children exposed to the unacceptable and disrespectful values found in the urban areas (Minnaar, 1993). On the other hand, Minnaar (1993:30) argued that "from April 1990 onwards, there were persistent public calls by the civic and political leaders at rallies and community meetings that hostel residents should vacate hostels to make way for exiles (this was linked to the call for the conversion of the hostels into family units)". This was even more reason for hostel dwellers to be against the conversion, as it not only threatened them socio-economically but also politically. They risked the chance of being displaced and probably losing their employment as a consequence.

I have not come across a study that states precisely how many hostel dwellers agreed to have the hostels converted. I have witnessed hostel dwellers not wanting the hostels to be converted into family housing (see Minnaar, 1993, Ramphele, 1993). Minnaar (1993:238) argued that the hostel dwellers are caught up in the 'politics of change', clinging to the known and trusted ways versus experiencing the new and unknown reality. With regards to the upgrading of informal settlements, Hindson and McCarthy's findings show that that people from KwaZulu-Natal often reject the claim that upgrading is in everyone's interest (1994:53). Indeed upgrading sometimes translates into displacement for the people affected.

A study conducted by Payze and Keith in 17 hostels across the country presented the perception of families and single people living in hostels. They argue that singles believe that hostels were never meant to house families and therefore are not equipped to do so, despite refurbishment and upgrading. Secondly, the lack of proper service delivery of basic services leads to overcrowding of public facilities which in turn leads to health hazards and a lack of hygiene. This also translated into lack of privacy. Thirdly, singles saw family units as a threat

as they felt that they could one day lose their single accommodation to the family units. Fourthly, recreation and educational facilities are seen as a motivation for children to trespass into the spaces of the singles. Families on the other hand, feared that singles might gang up against them. Families also felt that singles did not respect their privacy; hence they felt that it would be better if all hostels were converted into family housing. Singles were also accused of taking young girls away from their families in the hostels. Crime and unemployment were the two major problems that the two parties blamed each other for (Payze and Keith, 1993:50).

Although there has been a lot of criticism of the CRU programme by the hostel dwellers, it is not without its advantages for both male and female migrants. According to Rubenstein (1993), these include opportunities for healthy family life, opportunities for men to play a more appropriate role as the head of the family, financial benefits - establishing and supporting one home and reducing the time and expense of travelling - and greater job security in view of the perception that businesses were opting for a local recruitment policy. Some of the disadvantages that remain are that the relocation of the family could lead to a loss of land and property in rural areas; leaving behind elderly parents who do not want to transfer to the city; a loss of culture and tradition; a lack of safety and security; a violent and hostile environment for the family; disrupted schooling for children and an increase in the cost of living (Rubenstein, 1993:152).

3.8 The Functioning of the Hostel (2011)

The hostel, which is made up of the old blocks, informal settlements and CRUs is administered by seven main structures which ensure its proper functioning. These are the block chairmen committee; the zone committee; the *izinduna zezinsizwa* (heads of young men) committee; the community policing forum, political party committees, ward committees and the Siyanqoba Development Committee. Below is a brief explanation about each of these committees.

3.8.1 Key Structures Existing at the Hostel

- (i) The **Block Chairmen Committee** reports to the ward councillor but because of the political tensions at the hostel, all block chairmen report to the ward 39 councillor. Block chairmen are supposedly elected by the community to help facilitate the management of a particular block. This seemed to be the most powerful body at the hostel after the ward councillor, but also because they closely work with him. They serve as *izinduna*. Each block chairman usually has an assistant who the community members loosely call 'block chairman'.
- (ii) **Zone Committees:** there are 27 zones in the KwaMashu hostel. A zone is a conglomeration of a couple of blocks. The zone committee reports to the block chairman. This can be understood as a smaller version of the ward committee since a ward is geographically spread out.
- (ii) **Traditional Structure Committee (*Izinduna Zezinsizwa*)** organised by the area of origins report to *inkosi yase* (chief of) Mthunzini. They are responsible for organising men in different cultural activities.
- (iii) The **Community Policing Forum (CPF)** is organised by the community and reports to local police station commander. It is composed of members who are either elected or volunteer to be in this body.
- (iv) **Political Formations** (i.e. IFP, NFP and ANC): each of these political bodies has its branch/executive committees, as well as youth structure (e.g. IFP Youth Brigade) and women (e.g. ANC Women's League). However the IFP is currently and has always been the dominant party at the hostel. While other political parties do not really have any political space, it is being forged. ANC meetings take place outside the hostel for safety and security reasons.
- (v) **Ward Committees:** two municipal wards (39 and 40) which make up the hostel. Most of the hostel falls under ward 39, while ward 40 also embraces of KwaMashu section C and D. Ward 39 is and has always been under the leadership of the IFP. Ward 40 has been under the leadership of the ANC since the 2008 elections. As a result of the strong political tensions that still exist between the IFP and ANC; the ANC does not enter the IFP's jurisdiction at the hostel.

(vi) **Siyanqoba Development Committee**⁵⁰ was established in 2004 and is composed of 24 hostel community members who were elected at the start of the development process. This committee is representative of the two wards with each ward electing 12 twelve members. This committee has a number of portfolios: health, transport, and agriculture, etc. “This structure has its own constitution and holds elections once in three years. The functions of the committee are to develop (*thuthukisa*) the lives of the people in many ways, to make sure that people get employment opportunities, looking out for the social welfare of the people and disaster management. It is basically responsible for everything at the hostel” (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Committee, 03 February 2011). This committee works closely with the councillor and municipality and is also strongly affiliated with the IFP although its members argued that it is a neutral body. For example, when the ANC councillor wanted to call a meeting, the committee told him that he had to get permission from approximately seven other committees/structures in order to be able to have that meeting.

I am a councillor, and in practical terms, they are the ones who should be coming to me to get permission to hold any meetings in this area, I am above them. In other ways, I understood that as a statement which said “you are not allowed here, this is not your territory and stay away (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

I found that most of these structures serve political functions even when they are supposed to be neutral bodies⁵¹, i.e. Siyanqoba Development Committee. Secondly, some only exist theoretically, i.e. community policing forum and zone committee. Thirdly, most of them are comprised of the same powerful IFP organisers, i.e. block chairmen committee; Siyanqoba Development Committee and IFP branch committee (political formation). Finally, the power is concentrated and centralised, i.e. in cases where committees should be reporting to the superintendent, they would be found reporting to the ward councillor and the superintendent can sometimes participate or attend some of their meetings.

⁵⁰ Henceforth it will be referred to as Siyanqoba.

⁵¹ “I would not know how many block chairmen are under my zones because I do not quite work with them ... these block chairmen do not recognise me as a councillor” (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2011).

While KwaMashu has Siyanqoba, Cape Town has what is called *Umzamo* Development Project (known as *Umzamo*⁵²). This is one of the few organizations in South Africa involved in hostel redevelopment. *Umzamo* is active in the three African townships of Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu (collectively known as “LaGuNya”) in Cape Town.

The difference between Siyanqoba and Umzamo is that Siyanqoba is a committee which was formed by and for KwaMashu hostel dwellers and hence only serves KwaMashu whereas Umzamo is an organisation which tendered for and was awarded the position of social coordinator to serve three hostels in Cape Town. They are both key stakeholders in the hostel redevelopment programme. They both play a key role in facilitating the process of converting public hostels into family accommodation. They both are convinced that development is about the people as much as it is about the buildings. They promote social development as an integral part of the project, ensuring the central engagement of the hostel dwellers in the conversion and subsequent management of their places of residence. At KwaMashu there is a social facilitator and in Cape Town the same position is called the social coordinator. The social facilitator/coordinator manages the social aspects of the projects, a role that was identified and defined by the national government (see Thurman, 1997). The social facilitator is one individual while the social coordinator refers to one organisation but the functions and responsibilities are similar. Although Siyanqoba is a committee formed by KwaMashu hostel dwellers, the project manager and social facilitator serve all the hostels in Durban and not just the KwaMashu hostel.

3.8.2 Development Process (on-going)

This process refers to the “hostel redevelopment programme” proposed by the liberation movement pre-democracy and implemented by the democratic movement post-apartheid. The key stakeholders in the development process are the Project Manager and the construction company who wins the deal through a tender process. The Project Manager coordinates the project and is responsible for appointing and supervising the work of architects and engineers. The social facilitator and his/her secretary are employed by the construction company but the funding for their posts comes directly from the municipality. They assist in

⁵² Umzamo can be translated as ‘trying’

facilitating the development process; they serve as a bridge between the hostel community and the construction company. Siyanqoba Development Committee comprises elected members of the community. The Senior Admin Officer is famously known as the superintendent, is employed by the municipality, and acts not just as an observer in representing the municipality in all the development processes but is an implementer of the rules and regulations of the municipality. The last and most important stakeholder is the hostel community which is the target of this development. All these stakeholders are based at the hostel except the project manager whose presence is represented by the social facilitator since he reports to the project manager.

The development process started in 2004 and it was proposed that it would be finished in 2014. However, almost all the above-mentioned stakeholders argue that they will not be able to meet the deadline because of a number of on-going, unexpected challenges that they have encountered in the development process. The process is going slower than expected. The development process does not go according to wards or zones, but takes place according to the phases which were proposed by the construction company. Phases one to four have been completed. Phase one consists of 21 blocks; phase two 20 blocks, phase three 13 blocks and phase four have seven blocks. Site A has six blocks and site B has three blocks. Each block has 72 people in singles (heads of households). There are 24 units, with three bedrooms in each unit, and each unit is occupied by one person/head of household (who can decide if s/he brings his family and/or friends to live in the bedroom). In total, 5 184 people (heads of households) have been accommodated in the CRUs, excluding their partners and families. One bedroom can accommodate a minimum of one and a maximum of five people. Most people get accommodated in the kitchen by their families. Rent is R114 per month per head of household. After fights between the municipality and the hostel dwellers, it was agreed that the rent would be inclusive of water and electricity, which means that the pre-paid meters are now defunct.

3.8.2.1 Development Process Challenges

As has been highlighted above, a number of challenges have prevented the smooth running of the development process in the hostels. The research participants narrate three of these below:

(i) The new identity of the hostel

We have gone to the government to challenge him about the identity of the hostel. We asked him what does it mean and who named it because all hostels in eThekwinini do not know what this thing is. We also do not know what is a CRU and what does it mean in *isiZulu* and we also seek an explanation of it. Nobody has ever explained it to us until now. We asked Mabuyakhulu and continued asking the one who took over after him. Now the hostels are not a respected place to live with dignity. Hostels did have dignity at their time. This was a place where *abanumzane* (heads of households) lived without women. Now you find that there are women and children (Focus Group Discussion, 03 February 2011).

Nomkhosi: So this means women have taken away the dignity of the hostel?

Participant 1: Yes.

Participant 2: No, let us not put it that way. It is the way that things have turned out which resulted in loss of dignity. The coming together of both genders in such a place was problematic. At this stage we cannot say we really want to go back to having hostels. The name 'hostel' was new to us at some stage as much as the name 'CRU' is new to us now, so all we want is an explanation of what this thing is. All we want is development (*intuthuko*) and dignity (*nokuhlonipheka*). But we should not be forced to live with families. This is a migrants' place. People should come here to work and then go back home. The overcrowding eThekwinini is caused by the fact that households are shut down. People leave enough land home and come to live in informal settlements here. If people were restricted to live or come here, iTheku would not be this full/overcrowded (Focus Group Discussion, 03 February 2011).

(ii) Logistics on a national/provincial level

There are many development challenges that face the hostel. One of those is the fact that the hostel was managed by the provincial government. The provincial government does not provide any kind of infrastructure (i.e. water, electricity), and that is a mandate of the municipality. In provision of this infrastructure, the municipality used to bill the province for the different amounts of the services that were used by the hostel dwellers. It really did not monitor how electricity was used, whether it was stolen (*izinyoka*) or if they had their own bakery shops or had welding businesses using free electricity. Now the management of the hostel is under the jurisdiction of the housing department from the municipality. Now this makes the question of development to be even more important because if the dwellers have a problem with electricity, they cannot go direct to electricity department because they are not a client to them, the client is the housing department of the municipality, they have the responsibility of liaising with electricity. Now it takes lesser time to deal with kinds of problems compared to the past, that where we start when we talk of development. When the stakeholders meet to discuss certain issues and water and electricity are not on the agenda items, then that meeting is non-existent because these are the everyday life challenges at the hostel. It is the same challenge with water and sewerage tanks, if they have a problem at the hostel, the dwellers cannot go straight to that department responsible for that but they have to go to municipality housing. This becomes very much bureaucratic, which does not help them at all. Putting a meter system was also a huge debate before it was put in place because the units are

communal so who could take the responsibility of the other's accounts. Development issues become bread and butter issues. The hostel is a small space with many people and it is not well-managed. ... (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

(iii) Logistics on a local level

There was a big challenge between 2009/2010 when the allocation process commenced. Phase 4 was complete and the CRUs stood empty for at least a year. The main problem with this construction was that the municipality had installed pre-paid meters for water and electricity. These did not exist in the old buildings. The old blocks as well as the new CRUs had bulk meters, unlike the later ones which had prepaid meters. The Siyanqoba Development Committee mentioned that the project manager told them that the municipality had proposed that it puts pre-paid meters in the latest CRUs and the committee said no; they should not do that as it would make the lives of the people difficult since three different (and sometimes unrelated) individuals and/ or families lived in the same unit. They argued that it would have been better if only one family lived in one whole unit. Only billing one family head would mean that he was responsible for the other two families as well; how they used water and electricity and if they paid on time. The other two people/families had to give their financial contribution to the head, who then paid the municipality. If one person refused to pay as agreed on the allocated day, then people would end up fighting.

The idea that the municipality had was that there was going to be a head of the household between the three people/families, whether they were related or not did not matter. The head was going to be the one whose name would be registered and he would sign the lease agreement and get billed. If in any event the two other people/families died, the head of household would be in a position to occupy the whole unit and our question was: how many people were going to remain alive here at the hostel with that proposal? This was the government's suggestion and we opposed it totally. Instead we had a couple of questions that we directed to the government: 1. How safe are the other two people/families if the head knows that he will have the unit to himself once they are dead? 2. How safe is the head from being blacklisted if the other two people/families refuse to pay? We just thought that this was a way for the government to encourage people to continue shooting and killing each other (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Development Committee, 03 February 2011).

(iv) Funding

According to the Siyanqoba Development Committee and the office of the social facilitator, there was no budget allocation for 2010 from the housing department; hence the process had to be halted. Initially funding was drawn from the national government through the National Hostels Redevelopment Programme. The funds were approved and disbursed through the

provincial administration and channelled through the local authority (Thurman, 1997). However as challenge number two above has shown, the management of the hostels switched from the provincial government to the municipality, eThekweni Municipality in this case. In the case of LuGuNya, it was the Municipality of Cape Town.

3.8.3 Allocation Process (on-going)

The allocation process refers to the way hostel dwellers get access or are allocated to the new CRUs; moving from the old hostel blocks and/or informal settlements. The first step that takes place is the identification of the old blocks and shacks which need to be demolished in order for the new CRU buildings to be erected. The identification is done by the project manager; social facilitator; superintendent; councillor; a representative of the Siyanqoba Development Committee and a block chairman of that particular zone. Then the block chairman and the social facilitator have to go door-to-door taking down a list of the names of the people who reside in that space. Each has to have their own list but lists have to match. When the demolition process starts, the committee and the block chairman finds vacant spaces within the hostel to move the people from their original spaces which are about to be destroyed to any vacant space within the hostel. Women and children are especially considered when allocated spaces which might already be occupied by men. These people would have to live there temporarily. People are never made to wait/live in the shacks as temporary accommodation, since the intention is to do away with shacks.

At the beginning of the development process, there was a first set of CRUs which were built as transitional accommodation. They are referred to as sites A and B. Hostel dwellers were placed there temporarily while they awaited their own rooms. These CRUs were never meant to be occupied permanently by the dwellers until the end of the development process but the site A and B CRUs have been permanently occupied, which has made the transition period difficult to coordinate. This is an indication of a failure on the part of the key stakeholders facilitating this process as it was their responsibility to make sure that people allocated by them to those sites were reallocated to their new rooms. Six months is the estimated waiting period for dwellers while the construction process takes place, provided that there are no problems. Once the construction process is complete, it should not take more than a month for the dwellers to be allocated their new rooms. During the construction process, security

guards⁵³ are employed to look out for the buildings while being constructed. When the construction process is finished, their contract expires. When the new CRUs have been put up and ready to be occupied by the dwellers, the social facilitator and the block chairman get their lists and continue to facilitate the allocation process, in order to make sure that all the people who were removed get space in the new buildings. The block chairman knows his or her people and it is easy for them to remember who was placed where, and when they need to be called back to occupy CRUs (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Development Committee, 03 February 2011).

Before the dwellers take over the new rooms, there is a workshop on how to take care of the CRU, facilitated by the social facilitator. Representatives from the main stakeholders i.e. eThekweni Municipality the Electricity Department and the eThekweni Municipality Water Department are invited to this workshop. Block chairman and Siyanqoba Development Committee are also part of this workshop. The social facilitator facilitates the workshop, inviting the person from electricity and water to talk about the requirements and responsibilities of the user. As they get allocated new rooms, the dwellers have to sign a lease agreement with the municipality. The person who signs the lease is the one who gets billed by the municipality for rent as well as other municipal services (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Development Committee, 03 February 2011).

When I asked the ANC councillor how the allocation process worked, he said:

I don't quite know because I am not hands-on in it. I can't even implement it in the zones under my jurisdiction. Allocation is a big part of development. Once its development; it becomes political and then the political leaders try to monopolise that process and that is what they are doing (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2011).

The allocation process is not only a power and political struggle over space between the political leadership (ANC/IFP/NFP) of the hostel but it is also a point of tension and a reason for bitterness on the part of men against women. Most of the men have been at the hostel for longer than the women but most of the women who have come after the men have already been allocated to the CRUs. The 'first come first serve' principle does not apply in the allocation process. This again results in women dominating those who live not only in the

⁵³ Once the construction process starts, a security company is contracted to look after the property, the building material and every other process until the handing over of the keys takes place between the construction company and the hostel leadership/management. During the day there would be one security guard per block and two during the night (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Development Committee, 03 February 2011).

hostel but in the CRU because they have been removed from the informal settlements. Another point of tension that I could not ignore is the intergenerational group dynamics caused by the allocation process. There are younger men in the CRUs and older men remain in the old hostel blocks. Older men feel that they have been cheated; they feel that they have been forever waiting for this development process and now they are not even sure if it will ever reach them. This is because it is so slow. In the next couple of years they will need to retire and go back to the rural areas without having experienced 'development' first hand. They can "only see it from far like a sun setting" (Interview with Mr Bandile Makhathini, 2011).

The underlying feature between the political, gender and intergenerational dimensions is **power**. Power is being challenged and power is being resisted. Traditional norms and values do not matter anymore. Masculinity, seniority and headship are being re-defined by the new situations and processes that individual men do not have control over. Democracy rules, even if democracy is not what people want and even if it does not seem fair.

One of the most critical changes taking place is the role played by some of the structures mentioned above. For example, the Siyanqoba Committee together with the IFP ward councillor made it vividly clear that the allocation of an individual to a CRU does not imply the allocation of the CRU to the whole genealogy (this used to be the case in the past, as has been highlighted by the views of Bhekisisa Maphumulo in chapter 1). This means that if an individual lives alone and passes away while living in a CRU, it will be the responsibility the block chairman and the social facilitator will go back to their allocation lists and see who is on the waiting list. The person on the top of the list will be allocated that room. The committee and the councillor said this is to prevent making the CRUs *ifa lomndeni* (family inheritance). The committee members even said *ibhekwe ngehlo lokhozi leyoyinto*⁵⁴ which means they are paying a special attention to that tradition. "We are running away from making the rooms an inheritance so that when people die, their rooms have to be taken by their children who did not live with them at the hostel. It is the responsibility of the block chairman to report if there is anyone who passed away so that we would know that there is a vacant room in that block. We then make plans of getting somebody who would occupy that room and not for a person to be fetched from rural areas far from here to come and occupy

⁵⁴ This isiZulu phrase is used when one really tries to convey the critical nature of that particular issue such that it would be impossible for them not to notice it when it happens.

that room” (Focus Group Discussion with Siyanqoba Committee, 03 February 2011). This obviously changes not only the definition of the hostel as the hostel dweller knew it but it has also changed the roles played by the different people or structures within the hostel, i.e. the policing role of the councillor and the Siyanqoba Development Committee. It is at times like these that the older hostel dwellers would say it was better in Egypt because at least they knew that through their stepping into the hostel and getting a bed, their sons were almost guaranteed space in the same bed if they were no longer there. At some stage the same principle applied in workplace, where a father or uncle could easily find work for a son or nephew (see Zulu, 1993; Ramphele, 1993; Sitas, 1983). It is cases like these that prompted Mr Mthembeni Njobo to say, “we are all foreigners here and I do not understand how can some of us be dictating to others how they should be living their lives” (Informal conversation with Mr Mthembeni Njobo⁵⁵, 2011).

Mr Mthembeni Njobo actually said this just before the elections when the IFP councillor who had crossed the floor to the NFP was making people change their political affiliation because he and his team had changed theirs. Clearly the allocation process is turning out to be a very dangerous process. It is not only at KwaMashu hostel that people have died because of this process. Thurman notes that in the “Hostels to Homes” Pilot Project in 1994 in Cape Town, 29 demonstration units were destroyed by arson. The motive for the attack was unclear but suggestions range from political dissent to dissatisfaction with the allocation process. These are exactly the same reasons given after the death of a block chairman responsible for the biggest zone at the hostel. He was like the councillor’s right hand man. He also held powerful positions in the different hostel structures. He was shot two months after the allocation process of the blocks that he was responsible for.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Mr Mthembeni Njobo was an old and very conservative man from Hlabisa who started living at the hostel in 1965. He was formally employed by the municipality, water department. He did not like women and children living at the hostel. He had never brought any woman to the hostel and has at least three sons living at the hostel; two of them were doing their final year at UNISA in Education. Mr Mthembeni Njobo was allocated to the CRU in 2010. While he did not share his room with anyone, he shared the unit with two other young unemployed, unmarried ladies who lived with their two small children. He was a staunch IFP member and a dedicated member of the Baptist Nazareth Church/Shembe.

⁵⁶ I lived in one of his blocks as well. He was also one of my main contact persons at the hostel. After getting access to work at the hostel, the councillor referred me to him as my point of contact. From March 2009 till October 2010 he was the one who organised and helped me facilitate all my arrangements with the hostel dwellers. He introduced me to all the other block chairmen I needed to speak to during my fieldwork. He was a real father figure to most of the youth residing at the hostel.

3.9 Conclusion

Methodologically, this chapter has regressed in order to progress as theorised by Lefebvre ([1974]1991). As stated at the beginning, reflexive science has allowed me to discuss the history of the migrant labour system and its relationship to the hostel and compound system in South Africa and its changing governing systems across time and space. Through ethnography I have been able to use the KwaMashu hostel as one nodal point of interconnection with the rural areas in KZN, but also with other hostels in KZN as well as in other provinces like Gauteng and the Western Cape. This is where Massey's argument about space being linked through social relations becomes relevant. The above historical and geographical account has also shown the intricacy and profundity of the connection of space and place with gender and the construction of gender relations (Massey, 1994:2). Massey's argument about this connection working through the actual construction of, on one hand, real-world geographies and, on the other, the cultural specificity of definitions of gender (*ibid.*) is directly and mutually relevant for the production of space, place and gender in the KwaMashu hostel.

In my application of the reflexive science and relational comparison methods, I have been able to make broad statements stemming from the explanations of empirical phenomena. For example, I believe that the historical and geographical accounts above made clear that the migrant workers' hostels have not been "invisible to the general public" as has been argued by some scholars (see Thurman, 1997). The hostels and the people who live in them have always made themselves visible through the different everyday life situations and events that they engage themselves in and that in turn engage them, whether it is something negative like violence or something positive like retaining strong connections to the rural areas. The current state of the hostel has been produced by the hostel dwellers as much as it has been produced by the government. The role played by township dwellers should also not be disregarded. The hostel has been produced and reproduced in ways that are both gendered and political. What is important to note about these gendered spaces is that they do not always conform to the official discourse of what hostels are or even of what CRUs. One thing that is clear, however, is that where there are informal settlements, they conform to what is known and accepted as *imijondolo*.

As I have shown above, the repeal of apartheid laws and the coming into power of the democratic government in 1994 merely validated the challenges that were already posed by the hostel dwellers and their families to the apartheid regime. While Segal (1991) and Sitas (1996) believe that the abolition of influx control unleashed processes of social, economic and political dislocation for urban and rural communities, it did not put a halt to migrant labour. An important feature to note from this chapter is that a significant few symbolical features of the pre and post-apartheid era remains in and through the CRU programme. One major setback in the conversion process from hostel to CRU is that some aspects which Goffman called “barrier[s] to social intercourse” have not been removed from these social establishments, i.e. geographical location and the social relations have not been comprehensively reworked between hostels and townships (political) and within the hostel dwellers (gender). Furthermore, hostels still mainly accommodate migrant workers from the rural areas, as migrants have not been presented with many viable options post 1994. Instead what happens is that those who do not want to live in the hostels are pushed into the informal settlements, rent backrooms in the township or go back to the rural areas (Ngcongco, *et al*, 2006, Sitas, 1996). Christopher (2001) argues that African people’s residential options are severely limited by the wider circumstances within which they exist. The articulation of the hostel continues despite its shifts in meaning, hence its spatial reconfiguration. In the next chapter I will show how the traditional rural-urban interconnections because of and through the struggles for livelihoods have been changing. This will be reflected through changes in the labour market and gender dynamics.

CHAPTER FOUR

COLLAPSING LIVELIHOODS: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE RURAL-URBAN AREAS

4. Introduction

As challenged by Hart and Sitas (2004), in this chapter I specifically attempt to move beyond the urban-rural divide. I not only engage with studies that link land; labour and livelihoods as they proposed, instead, I significantly use the voices of migrants to make three main arguments about the inter-linkages of land, labour and livelihoods. In contributing to labour studies in South Africa, the first key point I make is that the analysis of rural-urban connections cannot be understood in isolation from the mode of livelihood. Linked to this, I argue that livelihood strategies of migrants are always multiple, diversified and stretched out across the rural-urban. As a way of charting the livelihoods struggles of migrants, I will list ten different but interrelated strategies that they use in their stretched-out everyday lives. I emphasise the importance of moving beyond the shop-floor, to investigate the lives of migrant workers and the meanings attached to their lives and relations. The second key argument is that, while there is on-going rural-urban migration as I have shown in chapter three; there are diminishing livelihoods for migrants both in the rural and urban areas. The main form of livelihoods procurement for the African people in the urban areas was and still is wage labour and in the rural areas it was land and livestock. Issues of land and labour in South Africa can simultaneously be understood as issues of the rural and the urban. As long as inequalities - 'uneven economic development' persist in South Africa, the differences in the rural and urban areas will always be present.⁵⁷ The third key point I argue is that while social grants play a key role in the lives of the beneficiaries and their households, they simultaneously play a contradictory and ambiguous role for the direct beneficiaries.

With regards to the first argument above, historically the rural was formed for the urban. As a result, South African has a long history of a migrant labour system and rural-urban migrations specifically. There was no wage labour for the African people without the rural-

⁵⁷ Rees, *et al.* (2009:25) have recommended that a more significant structural intervention is that of encouraging rural development. They argued that this would alter the conditions that force large numbers of young men [people] to seek temporary employment in the urban areas.

urban linkages. The urban was for the Whites and the rural/homelands/reserves were for the Blacks. Black people were the reserved army of labour which was needed to periodically come to the urban areas to minister to the needs of the White man. They were also burdened with the principal cost of reproducing that labour supply (Marais, 2011:9). Other than by offering cheap, wage labour, there was no official way that a Black person could be found in the urban areas. For a long time, the rural has been seen as contaminating the urban, as long as the rural was occupied by Blacks and the urban by Whites. South Africa has a specific history which always has to be taken into consideration; “apartheid was functional to capitalism” (Mamdani, 1996:294, see Elder, 2003a).

While Massey (1984:7) argued that “the geography of industry is an object of struggle”, I want to argue that the geography of livelihoods is a subject of struggle. While the major form of inequality used to be race, there has been a shift to class inequality. The employment status of the person is the strongest determining factor of one’s position in society. This does not imply that race has become void; instead, race, class and gender are now played differently to the times of apartheid. Rural-urban labour migration is one of the most pertinent features of the South African labour market as outlined in chapter three. Deteriorating economic conditions, particularly increasing unemployment, have precipitated a struggle for scarce resources where individuals have resorted to crime and violence in order to access these resources (Zulu, 1993). The second most important feature is whether one is in the primary⁵⁸ or secondary segment⁵⁹ of the labour market⁶⁰ (Barker, 1992, 1995, 2007; Webster, 1985)⁶¹. However, these are the very same dichotomies that this study is trying to break out of.

Below is a list of the livelihood strategies that are being used by the participants in this research study: (i) formal employment (ii) casual employment (iii) support from family, relatives and friends, (iv) informal and or self-employment (v) social grants (vi) the sexual economy, (vii) criminality (viii) livestock ownership (ix) land - agriculture and (x) informal money-saving schemes, i.e. *stokfels*⁶² and *umholiswano*⁶³. It is however important to note that

⁵⁸ “Offers some job security, relatively stable employment, and higher wages” (Webster, 1985:199)

⁵⁹ “Offers virtually no job security” (Webster, 1985:197)

⁶⁰ “But while the labour process is crucial in shaping these labour markets, there is a vital interconnection between the form of control inside the foundry and the form of control exercised over black workers outside the foundry” (Webster, 1985:212).

⁶¹ The two major divisions that took place in the labour market were racial, i.e. Black and White.

⁶² von Hodt and Webster (2005:39) defined stokfel or stokvel as “a community saving scheme common in the black community, it provides small-scale rotating pay-outs to its member”. This, as shown below is actually umholiswano; a stokfel is a process whereby a group of people collect and save the same amount of money

the order of livelihood strategies above is not according to importance and they are also not utilised individually but always diversified. My research findings have shown that relying on wage labour solely is restraining and does not paint a comprehensive picture of the everyday life livelihood struggles of migrants.

Some households concurrently use as many as five or more livelihoods strategies. An example is that of Mr Alfred Mkhize's household. He has been formally employed in company X based in town for 30 years; he informally sells clothes for women and men, and jewellery and sweets every time he gets a chance at the hostel as well as in the rural areas. He has two housewives living in the rural areas that look after his livestock; they are also involved in agricultural farming and receive different kinds of social grants. The main point in outlining these different livelihood strategies is applying the 'new theoretical framework' which tries to move away from the dichotomy of a formal sector and an informal sector, from urban-based and rural-based livelihood strategies. This study accepts the permanence of the traditionally secondary livelihood strategies i.e. informal economy and tries to look at the whole continuum of livelihoods procurement and the links between them (Lund, 2002). This study "adopts a mode of explanation which tries to break the dichotomy between formal models and empirical description. It recognises underlying causal processes, but recognises, too, that such processes never operate in isolation; for it is precisely their operation in varying combinations which produces variety and uniqueness" (Massey, 1984:6).

The above-mentioned livelihood strategies for the rural-urban spectrum include illegal ways of making a living. Omitting criminality as a livelihood strategy would not have done justice to the underlying intention of this chapter⁶⁴. Mosoetsa argued that illegal shebeens and the sexual economy are two examples of 'hidden livelihoods' that have emerged as a response to poverty. She further argues that such livelihoods are generally branded as bad and immoral. This leads to their becoming 'hidden livelihoods' (2011:72). Indeed, there is a confessed high crime rate at the hostel and an increasing crime rate in the rural areas (livestock theft, car

(sometimes amounts can vary) monthly. The money is then saved in a safe place, i.e. bank and distributed to each member accordingly at the end of the year. Each person gets paid according to what s/he contributed including interest.

⁶³ Umholo is pay/income. Umholiswano means helping each other get paid. This is slightly different to a stokfel. It is a process whereby people contribute the same amount of money every month and on a particular set day; they pay the whole amount to one person, taking turns. The number of people participating begins at two and the limit is set by the group.

⁶⁴ Which is to provide a critical discussion of the livelihood struggles of the migrants across the rural-urban dichotomy

hijack, etc.) and at least half of these crimes are related to robbery. Discussing criminality with the interviewees was a sensitive issue. However, when it comes to how people make a living, there are pieces of information that can and will only be available to the researcher through the kind of relationship she/he develops with the interviewee, the venue used for the interview as well as the time taken to get the answers from the interviewee⁶⁵ (see Lund, 2002).

An interesting example of multiple and diversified livelihoods procurement, which crosses the lines of legal and illegal; rural and urban; men and women is a situation that I experienced one day as I was conducting a focus group discussion with a group of *amathwasa*⁶⁶ with their spiritual mother (*isangoma*) at the hostel. In the middle of a discussion, an 11-year old daughter of *isangoma* came running in with a newspaper in her hand, looking very worried and excused herself for interrupting the focus group discussion. She quickly handed the newspaper to her mother who passed it on to the most educated *thwasa*⁶⁷ to read out the relevant article. The story that concerned all of them the most was about a 24-year old *inkabi* (hit-man), who was being reported to have lost a murder case. This man was hired by his cousin who was a police officer (South African Police Services- SAPS) to kill his colleague (also a police officer). *Inkabi* was sentenced to 24 years in the Durban High Court. Suddenly everybody in the room became sad and they later explained to me that *inkabi* was a client of Mam *Sangoma*. He came to them often, seeking traditional medicine not only to protect him from the police, but also to make sure that he was successful in what he went to do. *Isangoma* went on to explain that she was partly to blame for his loss in the court house because she had heard that *inkabi* had come looking for her the day before the court case and she was not available. Now she was concluding that he had come to get traditional medicine which was going to help him win the case. She was sure that if she had been there, she would have given him something that would have helped him win the case. *Inkabi* had, however, confessed in court that he had killed the police officer after being hired by his cousin (Focus Group Discussion, 30 June 2010); (see Isolezwe Newspaper 29 June 2010; IOL News, 25 June 2010; Witness, 29 June 2010; Sunday Tribune, 29 June 2010).

⁶⁵ See chapter five on *ubungoma*, criminality and livelihood making for both *isangoma* and the client/*isigebengu*.

⁶⁶ *Amathwasa* is a plural for *ithwasa*. *Ithwasa* is somebody who is in the process of being traditionally trained to become *isangoma*. *Isangomais* a traditional healer

⁶⁷ This *thwasa* was a third-year university drop-out student. She dropped out because her ancestors wanted her to become *isangoma*, so she was sickly and eventually went to traditional healers who told her that she had to become *isangoma* or she would die.

In another example of multiple and diversified livelihoods which cut across the rural-urban divide, I sat with a female interviewee who lived with her children and her siblings' children in her home in the rural area. She had lived there since her grandparents had passed away. I asked her about her sources of income and she only mentioned the money she gets monthly from her siblings whose children she is looking after, as well as the occasional cash from her mother who works and lives in a suburb, in a cottage belonging to her employer. During the course of the interview, after noticing a couple of people coming in to buy cigarettes, I asked her about it and she told me she is the owner of a little business, which had not been mentioned before, as she did not see this as a source of income worthy to be mentioned (Interview with Ms Thembeni Sikude, 15/08/2010). People underestimate the role of the informal activities they do (see Lund, 2002; Erasmus, 1999).

4.1 Sexuality: Gifts and Sex

“The theme of ‘immorality’ looms large in this commission, concerning all who sought to understand why the rural order was under threat. Its prevalence suggests that female independence and assertiveness were threats not only to the economic and political order, but to the moral order as well. Women were redefining their own sexuality in ways not acceptable to those who cast them as ‘reproductive’ potential wives of respectable Bafokeng men” (Bozzoli, 1991:108).

People, especially women's sexual role in livelihood struggles are also of paramount importance to the subject of this thesis (see Mosoetsa, 2011). Hunter's key argument is that intimacy, what he calls “the *materiality of everyday sex*, has become a key juncture between production and social reproduction in the current era of chronic unemployment and capital-led globalization” (2010:4). The sexual economy has become an important source of survival for many women, especially young women living in hostels and informal settlements in South Africa. Although married people engage in extra marital affairs, in the hostel, this is very prevalent among young unmarried women. It seems that it is easier to have many partners if you are not committed or married. In his article on “Cultural Politics and Masculinities” Hunter also shows how masculinities are redefined from changing material conditions, (2005). More than 20 years ago Bonner pointed to the degree to which sexual

relations were being transformed by market relations (1990). The high unemployment rate has been the primary cause for the growth of the sexual economy. Declining rates of marriage, although related to unemployment, are the second most important reason for the prominence of the sexual economy. Thirdly the introduction of the Bill of Rights as well as other policies and legislation empowering women can be interpreted as having a reasonable impact (i.e. the Gender Commission and Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (see *Shefer et al.*, 2008). Some women understood these structures as giving them the right to have multiple partners; an entitlement that men thought was theirs only (see Hunter, 2010)

Traditionally, whatever work that was done by a woman was supplementary to what the man, the head of the family, brought to the household. Today, men cannot afford to get married, let alone take care of their families, which might include illegitimate children from different women. Young women see the need to have more than one partner because 'he' alone cannot satisfy all their financial needs. Concurring with Hunter's (2002) findings, my data shows that women do tend to have one boyfriend who takes care of transport needs (this might mean that he has a car or that he gives her bus fare). Then she might have another boyfriend who takes care of her cosmetics, another one for her wardrobe, etc. Young women face more pressure to look fashionable than young men. Ramphela argued that "attractiveness becomes a matter of survival" (1993:80). Because these young women living in the hostels and informal settlements have young children back at home who are cared for by their parents, they are also expected to send some money for the maintenance of their children (see Hunter, 2002) which they do not always do.

While Zulu (1993) and many other scholars argued that prostitution is rife in hostels, I would like to lean more on Hunter's description and explanation of "cultural politics and masculinities" in the townships, and informal settlements when he looks at the "multiple-partners in historical perspective in KwaZulu-Natal" (2005). Having multiple sexual partners has become more prevalent and perhaps acceptable within certain social groups in South Africa, Hunter (2002) encouraged us to "think beyond 'prostitution'". He described the "close association between sex and gifts-resulting in what has been called 'transactional sex'-[which] is a central factor driving multi-partnered sexual relationships" (p.100). He further argued that "Transaction sex has a number of similarities with prostitution, i.e. non-marital sexual relationships, often with multiple partners and receiving gifts or cash as a result".

“[N]on-marital sexual relationships, often with multi-partners, are underscored by the giving of gifts or cash. Transactional sex differs in important ways: participants are constructed as ‘girlfriends’ and ‘boyfriends’ and not ‘prostitutes’ and ‘clients’ and the exchange of gifts for sex is part of a broader set of obligations that might not involve a predetermined payment” (2002:101). Some scholars have called it ‘sexual networking’. While some argue that multi-partnered relations are a “distinct and internally coherent African system of sexuality”, they point to the prevalence of such relationships patterns within African society and their embeddedness within its social structure (Cadwell *et al*, 1989:187). Although having multiple-sexual relations might not be an ideal situation either morally or medically for both men and women, in this case it can be interpreted as serving to mark the challenges to the ‘dominant masculinities’. This is an important point because men have long been known to be *amasoka* and it has always been acceptable and even celebrated by African societies (see Hunter, 2002).

There is a general agreement among both men and women that most of these relationships are characterised by mutual abuse and that both partners derive whatever benefit they can while they can. The benefit for men is mainly that of having a domestic slave to attend to their laundry, cooking and cleaning in addition to providing an outlet for pressing sexual needs (Ramphela 1993:78, see Hunter 2006). Sexualities are unstable and are produced through men and women’s practical engagements with shifting economic, cultural and spatial conditions and relations (Hunter, 2002:101). Although most of the women in informal settlement do come from the rural areas, on their arrival, they go through a process of change whose levels differ from one individual to another as well as from one context to another. It can be argued is that the location/context/geography of the informal settlement plays a significant role in the reconstruction of gender identities. Secondly, it is important to note that informal settlers are not only rural migrants but some people move from the townships to live in informal settlements. This means that the behaviours found there will surely differ; they will converge and diverge at particular points.

Men and women both use each other to release stress; they do not always get into relationships because of love. While *ukuqoma*⁶⁸ can be understood as a survival strategy, as documented by Hunter, in addition, I understand it as an action of wanting to belong; it is a

⁶⁸ For a woman to choose or accept a lover, after being proposed

search for a sense of belonging. *Ukuqoma* could also be validated as a social/leisure activity. Although in this section *ukuqoma* is explained in terms of economics, it is relevant to look at it from a social point of view as well. For example, a lot of people said that they have seen women who have live-in partners who are working, while the women are unemployed. While the partner is at work and she has finished doing her house chores, she finds herself a boyfriend to keep her busy. With this other boyfriend, she might engage in different and interesting activities compared to the one who works during the day, comes back in the evening, and needs food and rest⁶⁹. Ms Mbali Zikode, an unemployed young lady who lives in an informal settlement with her friends, told me that she has a fiancée (somebody who has started the introductory phase of the *lobolo* process); he works in Johannesburg and lives in Pongola. They only see each other few times a year but he calls her often. After being in the hostel for few months to seek work, she has *qoma'd* another man who lives at the hostel. She said she did not do this for money, although the man partly supports her financially. Her fiancée sends her money every month end.

Positioning multiple-partnered relations as one element of “distinct and internally coherent African system of sexuality” influential demographers have stressed the prevalence of such relationship patterns within African society and their embeddedness within its underlying social structure (Caldwell *et al.*, 1989:187; see also Hunter, 2002). On a broader level I want to argue that there has always been a strong link in African societies between gifts and sex. When one examines the processes that take place between two people and broadly two families, what is called the *lobola* process; it is basically a long series of exchanges of gifts from one family to another, including gifts from the groom to the bride and vice versa. These families are brought together by two people, who intend committing themselves to marriage. Traditionally the couple is allowed to engage in sexual activities after the African wedding service. However, Hunter argued that often through brutal and economically coercive relationships, women have access to power that is not allowed by the *lobola* process, which is based on male to male transactions (2002).

To be more specific, the difference is that in the past, for women to have more than one sexual partner was an abomination. If women had multiple sexual partners, they had to keep

⁶⁹ Although this was attested to by a large number of men and a reasonable number of women, it was difficult to find a woman who would confess in doing such a thing.

it a secret; once it was known they were called derogatory names like *isifebe*⁷⁰ (bitch) as compared to *isoka* (smooth talker/operator; somebody who is able to have many girlfriends at one time), which is more complimentary. Today more women are engaging in multiple sexual relationships and they don't always feel shy about it; some go to the extent of justifying that as a survival strategy (see Hunter, 2002). These changes introduce a new set of concepts, dimensions and interpretations. Hunter (2006:147) encourages us not to look at these engagements as prostitution and also not as short term market exchanges as they stretch over time and space in many important ways.

One factor that has established itself quite clearly is that migrants, especially women are not passive victims of processes, but are social actors, drawing on personal and cultural resources to shape their choices and to structure their lives (James, 1999). Hunter further argued that women approach transactional relations not as passive victims, but in order to access power and resources in ways that can both challenge and reproduce patriarchal structures (2002:101; 2006). This has been “a confirmation of the assertion that the ‘domestic struggles’ within a society are crucial determinants of the patterns taken by its response to economic hardship (they are of course, not the only determinants)” (Bozzoli, 1983:153).

Hunter (2002, 2005, and 2006) has put forward a number of reasons why marriage rates are declining in South African society. Men find it difficult to afford *lobolo* and *ukwakha umuzi* (building a home). Being ‘away from home’ also has a lot to do with it. People, especially women tend to behave in different ways (because of many reasons) from the way they behave when they are at home. For example, some go to church back at home but not when they are in the hostel. Some do not wear pants at home but they do at the hostel. Most have a responsibility to their children (and younger siblings perhaps) but they do not have that in the hostel. Most importantly, most of their parents are not in the hostel. Some find it easy to have multiple sexual partners whereas that is something they would rarely do back at home. All these differences have an impact on the individual. This person becomes a changed being, which results in changed actions and reactions. S/he changes the role that s/he plays in the hostel setting and in the village; this impact on the social relations that s/he has both at the hostel as well as in the village. S/he redefines his or her sexuality, gender roles and relations in the process of moving back and forth. Another example of people's redefinition of the self

⁷⁰ The insult of *isifebe* hovers over women traditional gendered roles in the home and elsewhere (Hunter, 2005:398).

is doing crime in the urban areas and being known as *isigebengu* (criminal), whereas at home they would not have even a slight idea about how rough you can be when in the urban areas.

4.2 Criminality

“ ... At the start of the 21st century, an immense migration, fuelled by the fascination of the city’s bright lights and the hope of escaping the stupefying misery of the countryside, accelerates and extends urbanization to the furthest reaches of the planet.” In two years’ time, “for the first time in our history,” the report noted, “the majority of humanity will dwell in cities. ... Inequality and injustice, misery and violence, criminality and corruption, are the price of this mutation, which economic globalization amplifies.”” (Merrifield, 2006:76).

Mr Bandile Makhathini is from eMpangeni. I was lucky because I got an opportunity to interview his son at the hostel, then his two wives in the rural areas and then back to him in the hostel. He can be said to have four wives, the first is late, the second and third are present and the fourth left after having two children with him. The third wife has two children and the second wife has only one child. The first late wife had one child. He came to the hostel when he was between 18 and 19 years old, through his neighbour who worked in Durban. He started by working as a ‘garden boy’ for one year and six months, before he started his long term employment. He has been working for the same company since 16 November 1966 and he is approaching retirement. At the hostel he lives in a block house together with one other man. He has an informal settlement close to his shack which has a couple of rooms with separate doors. His son lives next door to him in a block house together with three other men who all come from the same area as the Makhathini family. Below is an excerpt from an interview I had with him (16 January 2011):

Makhathini: I start work at eight

Nomkhosi: Where do you work?

Makhathini: Macsteel at Isipingo.

Nomkhosi: What form of transport do you use?

Makhathini: A train.

Nomkhosi: I used to hear that there are a lot of criminal activities in trains. Since you have been taking the train to work for decades, would you say that you have noticed anything with regards to crime?

Makhathini: We have had a lot of that in trains.

Nomkhosi: Is it better now?

Makhathini: Although I have never witnessed violent and criminal acts, but there were times where when we got on the train in the morning to work, we would find pools of blood in the seats and floors, and we would know that people were being attacked. But luckily I have never had to work in the night, to experience those things.

Nomkhosi: So you would say crime mostly happens in the night?

Makhathini: Yes, especially when people sit scattered and not in groups in the train. Then started the issue of preaching in the trains, this is the thing which I feel reduced the crime rate in trains.

Nomkhosi: how? Is it because people hear the gospel and repent or that they are sitting in big groups?

Makhathini: The fact that they sit in big groups. But I would also say that it depends on a person's luck because as I said it has never happened to me or in front of me. You know, even here at the hostel, *kuyabulawana stelek*, (people kill each other too much), but again I have never witnessed those acts. But it happens that as I walk to the train station early morning, I would hear somebody screaming for help.

Nomkhosi: What time do you leave the hostel to go to the train?

Makhathini: Between 4.10 and 4.15am

Nomkhosi: And you only start work at 8am?

Makhathini: Yes.

Nomkhosi: How many trains do you take?

Makhathini: Two.

Nomkhosi: You take four hours to get to work every day whereas you could take 30 to 45 minutes by car?

Makhathini: The thing is when we change trains from one to the other; we need to wait for a while in the train station for the second train.

Nomkhosi: But 4.10am is still too early!

Makhathini: This thing goes according to getting used to it, there are people who go to the same work place but leave later than this time and they still get to work on time.

Nomkhosi: What time do you reach work?

Makhathini: At 6.30am.

Nomkhosi: 6.30am? But what time did you say you started work?

Makhathini: 8am.

Nomkhosi: And what do you do all this time?

Makhathini: I get there and read my newspaper, and at 7.30am, most people come in to work and then I would go to the kitchen to drink tea and at 7.50am go to my work station and get ready to start working. I don't get tired from sitting and waiting at work because I am used to it... as I told you before that the hostel was really like home. Alcohol was never allowed in our rooms, it could only be consumed at the beer hall. People started sneaking it into our rooms and selling it to each other in the rooms until that became a norm. There was a white person who used to sell alcohol that was called *ubhokweni* it used to be very strong, one would get drunk from it and do not even know where his room is located and he would sleep on the pavement of the road. As I said to you that we used to respect each other very much in this place, when people found somebody drunk on the road, they would take him and send him to his room. They would not take or steal anything from him, no matter how much amount of money he had, they would not take it but bring him back to his room and report to other men in the room what possessions they found on him. This thing [crime] started later when women came in and this place is now full of *tsotsis* (criminals).

Nomkhosi: Can you say that women are *tsotsis*?

Makhathini: It's not them directly, people confuse things. But that's how respect got finished, this place became a jungle and there is no trace of *inhlonipho*.

Crime is obviously a big problem at the hostel and it is highly gendered. The issue of criminals and their activities was discussed a lot by the migrant workers, who argued that criminals are people from the townships, mostly Inanda and Ntuzuma who come to the hostel through their relations with women living in the informal settlements of the hostel.

Criminals use imijondolo to hide. People who have money live in imijondolo because that is where they hide. Not long ago, we found a car that was hijacked there and it was hidden in such a way that it was difficult to find it. There is a long distance between the main road and those *imijondolos*. People die in that place; there are also a lot of *izinkabi*⁷¹ at the hostel. I always contest the idea that the high crime rate at the hostel is caused by the high rate of unemployment. I don't believe that. I always say that when our parents raised us, they were basically poor but they never turned on to crime. I think it is the lifestyle that people choose for themselves, they want to live lives that they do not afford and qualify to live. People basically want to live lives that are fake and not theirs (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2011).

Secondly, when migrants realise that some of the people who do crime at the hostel are the very same people, mostly young men who come from the rural areas; they argue that this is caused by the fact that people (migrants) do not come from the same origins. There is an assumption that had people all come from the same area, there wouldn't be a high crime rate as they would be mutual relations and interests. Basically what makes the hostel dwellers and the councillors feel better is the knowledge that "it is the other people and not us who are doing crime". This "othering" could be geographic, generational, political or any category which will confirm difference. On the other hand, Sitas's work shows us that misdemeanour was there even in early days of the formation of the hostels. "It was this intensification of 'illegality' at the hostels that brought about its obverse: an intensification of 'blackjack' raids to stamp it out... On the average 'blackjacks' raids happened two to three times a week. For a short period in 1977 and 1980, all the inmates reported raids almost every night. Feelings of discontent exploded into large meetings of hostel workers that debated ways and means of stopping the blackjacks ..." (Sitas, 1983:264).

It has been reported by hostel dwellers that young men are tempted into becoming *izinkabi* (hit-men) in order to get paid at the end of the day (Interview with Londiwe Mgaga, 21 July 2009 and 28 December 2010). "For many, 'robbing the rich' has become the only means of

⁷¹ Hit-men

survival” or taking lives (Barker, 1992; 1995:112; 2007:172, see Erasmus, 1999). Below is an example of how one respondent used the ‘othering’ process to explain the crime at KwaMashu:

Although I might not know the crime statistics of the hostel because the police sometimes refuse to release them but KwaMashu as a Township, I know the AIDS activist, Gugu Dlamini who was killed, it was reported all over the news that she was killed at KwaMashu only because she disclosed her HIV status and she wanted to live a positive life that she is HIV positive. But the truth is, Gugu Dlamini was not killed at KwaMashu, she was killed in the outskirts, the periphery of KwaMashu, she was killed at KwaMancinza, which is not the township, it is a squatter settlement outside the township. But it was reported that this thing happened at KwaMashu. Statistically, this township has the highest rates of murder, for two consecutive terms when police release their statistics. But when we check why and where in KwaMashu, we find that it is at the KwaMashu hostel and secondly at Besters area. Crime is really rife at the KwaMashu hostel more than any other area. Even when car hijacks of cash-carrying vehicles take place, they get planned at the KwaMashu hostel. Police officers from the organised crime unit always track them down to the hostel. The petty crimes are also more prevalent at the hostel. I once called a meeting with KwaMashu section B community, where the IFP councillor and his committee and the police were present, we gathered to discuss the problem of crime. The section B community proposed that I put a fence around the hostel because the people who brought all the trouble are the hostel dwellers. I did not take that proposal seriously because it felt that they wanted a Berlin Wall which was also demolished. The fact that ward demarcations have been like this is also partly to re-integrate societies that are doing well and the ones which are not doing well. So in short, yes we have high rates of crime at the hotel, and we cannot control it at the moment because of the congestion (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

Tracing connections across dispersed and differentiated sites (rural and the urban, hostel and township, etc.) enables us to show how the production of commodities is inextricably linked with the production of racial, gendered and ethnic forms of difference, and how these dimensions of difference are produced in relation to one another as active, structuring forces (Hart, 2002:41; Hall, 1980). Hostel dwellers also made linkages between alcohol abuse and criminality:

Participant 1: The idea of having many beer halls in the hostel is a problem, but what is even worse is having these places opening till late. What criminals do is going to the beer halls in the night, drink a lot of alcohol while passing time for people to fall asleep, then early hours of the morning, they would go and do crime in the different places (Focus Group Discussion with women 21 January 2011).

4.3 Livelihood Struggles: Challenging Situations and Difficult Choices

The stories of the following three women show that space, place, roles, relations, responsibility and rural-urban interconnections are sometimes forged and continuously reworked depending on the particular circumstances of the individual and his or her points of interconnections. These three women are used as departure points to explain things that are larger than the individuals.

4.3.1 Phili's Situations and Choices

Mrs Phili Ngcobo is in her mid-20s is married to Mr Ngcobo who is in his late thirties. Phili lives in the hostel with and through her husband. She has two children who live in the rural area with her husband's family. While she is unemployed and a housewife, her husband is permanently employed at company Z. Mr Ngcobo came to live at the hostel through his father and before he got married, he used to live with his two other brothers. This was the time when they all lived in the block houses. When people had to register for CRUs, Phili and her husband were in the rural area, and could not register. When the construction of the CRU block was finished, while two other Ngcobo brothers were allocated to their own rooms, Phili's husband, the oldest brother of the two, could not get a room. So for quite a while he stayed with his other brother, the younger one who did not have his fiancée living with him in the hostel. The two older brothers lived with their partners. The second brother was not married but lived with the mother of his child. The younger brother is not married and does not have a live-in partner. They are all from the same area (eShowe) and they all go to the same church (*abaphostoli*⁷²).

After Phili and her husband tried and failed to get a room in the CRU, they started looking for accommodation outside the hostel and they were able to get an RDP house in Westridge (Newlands). It took them a while before they actually made a decision to move out of the hostel and settle in their RDP house. When asked about the reasons for the delay in relocating, their response was "the life in Westridge is way more expensive than the life at the hostel. Firstly it costs Mr Ngcobo R60 per day to go and come back from work in

⁷² Abaphostoli means Apostles, the full name of the church is known as '12 Apostles of Jesus'

Montclair whereas it used to cost him only R10 per day to go and come back from work. At the hostel he used the train to go to work and in Westridge he has to use taxis”.

Secondly, although they are not paying rent, they have to buy electricity and pay for water whereas at the hostel they did not have to pay for anything since they did not own a room. Because their younger brother was not working and they were staying with him, they would pay the R114 per month that everybody has to pay which includes rent, water and electricity. In addition, living with brothers in close proximity to family members is totally different to living about 10-15 km away. It is even more difficult when one cannot just take one taxi in order to reach the other place but needs to take two taxis because there is no public transportation which goes straight from point A to B.

In summary, faced with a situation of being housewife in the rural area with a husband who was migrant worker, Phili decided to come and live with her husband who was not very happy with her coming to live at the hostel full time. Being a mother of two primary school going children, she decided to leave them with grandparents in order to be with her husband and only visit them once a month if she can afford that. While the idea of living with close family members can be a point of comfort, her actual living conditions were not comfortable as she used to sleep on the floor because her younger brother-in-law could not sacrifice his space and place for her to sleep on the same bed with her husband. Sleeping in the same bedroom with a male-in-law⁷³ was unacceptable. So she slept on the floor at the kitchen. The fact that the whole unit was shared by the two other families/couples made her life even more difficult. It was after the other families/couples lodged a complaint about her being in the way on the floor when they had to wake up early in the morning and prepare to go to work or when they came back late in the night that she and her husband vacated that space and moved to their new space outside the hostel.

4.3.2 Londiwe's Situations and Choices

Londiwe is a 28 year old from Hlabisa. She chose came to the hostel to look for a job, following her cousin and friends. She came to the hostel in 2008 and was unemployed for

⁷³ It was clear here that the issue was gender and not the “in-law” relationship per se. Had the in-law being a female, Phili would have been allowed to sleep on the floor in the same bedroom with the sister or mother-in-law.

more than a year. She then got a really bad and dangerous job at a local factory, but found it difficult to quit. Her colleagues had their fingers cut by the machines they were using. She was in a secondary segment job where there was no security and bad working conditions. Finally she decided to quit, compelled by new circumstances at work. The company she worked for relocated. It moved to about 10 km away and it was expensive for her to travel. Initially she used to walk to and from work every day and when the company relocated; she had to take a train which is not really expensive. The problem was that she still needed to take a taxi after jumping off the train. She felt that taxis were an unreliable and expensive form of transport and she came late to work every day; as a result she would get shouted at and threatened. This became too much for her and she quit.

Londiwe's mother lives in the rural area with her younger siblings. Her mother is a self-employed woman who has been able to move from one level of strength to the other. She comes and buys her merchandise, which ranges from clothes to shoes and jewellery from urban areas to sell in the rural areas and is a very successful business woman. This is her main survival strategy, followed by social grants for her younger children. That is supplemented by remittances that she rarely gets from her husband.

She has built a nice brick-house where Londiwe has her own fully furnished room. This room was built while she was away (at the hostel)⁷⁴. While in the hostel she lives in a shack. When she came she used to share this one-roomed shack with her three friends who are her neighbours from Hlabisa and her late cousin. This room only had one single bed and two girls slept on the floor while the other two slept in the bed. When I came back to the field for the second phase of fieldwork, I found that the other three girls were not living with her anymore. Two of them had gone back to Hlabisa for a job opportunity. Both of them had worked in a tavern in Hlabisa and they stopped working there because of certain challenges that they were faced with at the time, including bad working conditions. After a long time of being unemployed at the hostel, when they heard that the same tavern was looking for employees, they decided to go back to work there. In December 2010 when I went to the rural area, I visited them at their workplace. One of the two fell pregnant with her second child. The other girl had moved out to go and live with her boyfriend in the surroundings of the hostel.

⁷⁴ I remember when she told me that she had heard from a younger brother that her mother had built a room for her but she had not seen it. When she came back she told me that it was true and she was quite excited about it.

It was in this way that Londiwe ended up living by herself in the one roomed shack. After a couple of months of living by herself, she decided to fetch her four-year old son from the rural areas to live with her. During the first phase of my fieldwork, she was involved with a man who was from Hlabisa and lived in the KwaMashu Township. When I came back for the second phase of fieldwork, I found that she had broken up with him. She said that he got arrested for assault. He and his friends assaulted a person while they were drunk one night. The man she was involved after that is from Maphumulo and lives in the hostel in a blockhouse. This new boyfriend seemed decent; he worked, he and Londiwe always walked to and from work together although they did not work in the same place. He spent a lot of time with Londiwe and his son and he played a fatherly role to Londiwe's son. He babysat anytime there was a need and he even promised to marry Londiwe. After a short while it was discovered that he was a possessive and abusive cheater. He verbally abused Londiwe and sometimes beat her in public spaces. Londiwe tried several times to break up with him without much success. She claimed that she loved him and was able to forgive him every time after he did something bad to her.

On the other hand, her mother knew about her boyfriend but did not know anything about the abuse. She knew about the shack she lived in as she had visited once and could not believe what her daughter's accommodation looked like. She also knew about the bad conditions at work. She always encouraged Londiwe to go back home, to sleep in her own beautiful room and work with her mother in her own business, but Londiwe consistently and continuously refused. She wanted to prove to her mother that she could make it on her own. Immediately after she resigned from her job, she started joining network marketing companies and was involved in stokvels. She did not want to go back home because she felt life was much easier and more interesting at the hostel. She did not want to depend on her mother for anything as her mother had done a lot for her already and made a lot of sacrifices for her. She has also witnessed her father abusing her mother and she did not want to go back to that situation. She also 'hated' the idea of running after the people who owed her mother cash. She did not like to do the house chores and responsibilities she is confronted with when she lives in the rural area.

When I visited the hostel in November 2011, I found that Londiwe was pregnant with her third child from the same man who abused her. She was in her eighth month and the man had not gone to pay for damages. He promised to go early in December, but Londiwe said she

would still believe it when she saw it. She had not been home in eight months. Her mother supposedly did not know about the pregnancy; she was terrified of her mother's reaction. She gathered that her mother already knew about the pregnancy, adding that her "mother is not stupid". While I was at the hostel I also saw Mbali, one of Londiwe's friends/Hlabisa neighbour whom I had last seen in December 2010 working in a tavern. I was informed that they lost the job because there was a robbery and the owner suspected that they had something to do with it. Mbali told me that she intended going back to Hlabisa in December.

4.3.3 Mam Nonhle Kheswa's Situations and Choices

Mam Kheswa is 62 years old and is from Vryheid. She came to live in the hostel in the mid-1980s. Her first stop from the rural areas was at Umlazi Township where she lived for a couple of years before she decided to come to the hostel to live with her newly found partner. She had to come to the city to look for job opportunities in order to be able to support her two children, especially since she was not married. She lived in a shack with her partner who was from Maphumulo for about 25 years and was never married nor had children with him. She lived with this man until he retired about three years ago, went back home, fell sick and passed away. He had never been to Ms Kheswa's home in the rural area and she had never been to his home; this was how he and Ms Kheswa showed respect to the wife in the rural area. She was not able to attend his funeral, not only because this was a married man who had his wife and children in the rural area, but because when he retired there was some kind of a communication breakdown as he did not have a cell phone and there was no other way for her to contact him. This was also the reason why she did not know about his ill-health. Although she knew a relative of this man who also lived at the hostel, and she had met his children when they visited him at the hostel, when he died, nobody told her about it. She got to know about his death a couple of months later through an old friend of his.

About two years ago, she got really sick and she could not even go to work. She fell sick during the period when people from her zone were being moved in order for shacks and blocks to be demolished as the new CRU were going to be erected. She had to ask for a special favour from her block chairman that she not be moved to the area where everyone else was being moved to, because this would be too far for her to reach public transport, especially in her situation of ill-health. Instead she and her family (daughter and

grandchildren) were temporarily placed in a close by block house which was mostly vacant. This block chairman also happened to be her daughter's boyfriend of her daughter and the father of her three-year old granddaughter. This block chairman was married with two wives, one in the rural area and one based in the township.

Despite her ill health Ms Kheswa could not go back to Vryheid, where she came from because her parents had passed away long time ago and her siblings had got married and built houses in different parts of KwaZulu-Natal. A neighbour now lived in the family home, taking care of it in their absence. In summary, faced with the choice of staying in the rural area and try to find a husband to marry and take care of her children, Ms Kheswa decided to come to the city to look for employment. While she could have continued to give birth to more children as is the norm with African women her age, she decided to stop at two children and focus on working to support them. When her parents passed away she decided to invite her daughter (born in 1976) to come and live with her at the hostel since her son got a job in Johannesburg and was settled there. Faced with a situation of being old, sick, close to retirement age and not having a source of social support, she decided to stay at the hostel with daughter and grandchildren until she recovered.

Ms Kheswa considers herself to be very urbanised, since she came to the city when she was very young. She did not get the kind of training that one gets in the rural areas in terms of parenthood, since she left her very young children with her mom; as well as in terms of *umakoti* since she has never been married. Relocating to the rural area is also not an option for her, as outlined above.

4.4 Unemployment

Rural-urban migration is one of the routes through which people diversify and multiply livelihoods. The diversification of livelihoods attempts to work against the effects of unemployment. Urbanisation, a lack of housing and high unemployment rates shows that there is still a high dependency on wage labour in South Africa regardless of the dwindling rates of employment. My findings show that rural-urban migration continues even if employment is not available for the migrants (see Hunter, 2010). Hunter argued that we have shifted from “mostly men *earning a living* and supporting a wife to many men and women

making a living in multifarious ways” (2010:5; see von Holdt and Webster, 2005). This section attempts to address the second key argument of this chapter. The first part discusses failing livelihoods procurement in the urban areas. The two sections that follow, on the role of land and livestock, serve to illustrate the collapse of livelihoods in the rural areas.

Almost half of South Africa’s population lives in poverty and more than one third cannot find waged work (Marais, 2011:5). Unemployment is rife among women and youth and in certain geographic areas and KwaZulu-Natal is one of those areas (Barker, 1992; Erasmus, 1999; see Standing, *et al*, 1996). South Africa, like other developing countries, has an over-supply of unskilled workers (unemployment) and a shortage of skilled workers (Erasmus, 1999; Barker, 2007). Standing *et al*, (1996:103) note that unemployment is hard to define partly because it combines a *condition* (being without employment); a *need* (for work or income); an *attitude* (desire for paid work); a *capacity* (ability to accept an opportunity, or at least, availability to do so), and an *activity* (searching for work) (original emphasis).

In South Africa, an unemployed person is a person who is without work, is currently available for work, and is seeking work or wanting to work (Barker, 2007). This broad definition is usually refined in certain respects, and in this regard the definition used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is relevant. The unemployed are those people within the economically active population who (i) did not work during the seven days prior to the interview; (ii) want to work and are available to start work within a week of the interview and (iii) have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the four weeks prior to the interview. The definition above is the so-called ‘strict definition’ of unemployment (*ibid.*).

The limitation of the above-mentioned definition is that the last criterion, namely “having taken active steps to look for work” is not always realistic in a country with such high unemployment and poverty rates. If there is a high unemployment rate, the unemployed person may have lost hope of finding a job and for that reason does not take active steps to seek employment, although they may be desperately in need of a job. In addition active steps to seek employment may involve expenses such as transport costs to the nearest employment office or factory site. In such a case, an unemployed person would not take active steps to seek a job and they will be regarded as “*discouraged work-seekers*” (original emphasis)

(Barker, 2007:174). Expecting unemployed persons to actually look for work in order to be regarded as unemployed therefore understates the true rate of unemployment (*ibid.*).

There is also what is called the expanded definition of unemployment, which simply excludes the third criterion i.e. the requirement for people to look for work. The official definition of unemployment in South African is the strict definition mentioned above. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) refers to the people who do not fulfil the third criterion as discouraged work-seekers; accordingly they do not form part of the labour force or the unemployed. The fact that people want to work and are able to take up employment within a short space of time is regarded as an adequate indication of their need and availability to work. The number of people that could be counted as unemployed if the expanded definition is used i.e. by including the “discouraged work-seekers” could be quite substantial.

The strict definition of unemployment excludes many rural people because they find it more difficult to “actively take steps to find a job”. For example, the unemployment rate for the African people living in the rural areas according to the strict definition was 32% in 2001 but when the expanded definition was used, the rate went up to 51% (Barker, 2007:176). In 2005, a quarter of those unemployed had been searching for a job for one to three years; 35% had been looking for three or more years; and the remainder had ceased looking for a job because of discouragement (Altman, 2007:7).

According to Barker, the official unemployment rate in rural areas is higher than in urban areas; however when using the expanded definition, there is a much larger difference. This is because of the greater difficulties people in the rural areas experience in “actively taking steps to find a job”, which is required to be officially counted as being unemployed. Public transport and basic groceries are more expensive in the rural areas. The excerpt below demonstrates the differences between the rural and the urban areas according to the migrants’ point of view. Doda is a 25 year old man who is originally from Maphumulo and lives in the hostel with his four brothers; he works as a security guard. He passed matric in 2007 and came to live permanently at the hostel the same year he finished school. This extract reveals issues of rural-urban livelihoods struggles.

Nomkhosi: So what was your reason to come to the hostel?

Doda: I came to look for amatoho (casual jobs).

Nomkhosi: Since you say you came for amatoho, would you say that you found them?
Doda: Yes, we can say that because we are able to eat something before going to bed.
Nomkhosi: would you say that all you are struggling for is to eat something before going to bed or you would like something a little better than that?
Doda: There is not much that we can say because we are not educated.
Nomkhosi: But you said you passed your matric?
Doda: That does not help because I was not able to further my studies because of not having finances to do so. ...
Nomkhosi: What are the three things you like about living at the hostel?
Doda: I like it because the public transport that I use when I go to work is very close. Secondly, shops are closer and quite cheap.
Nomkhosi: Cheap, compared to where?
Doda: Well, they are very cheap here compared to the ones in the rural areas, you cannot go to bed on an empty stomach in the hostel when you have a R2 but R2 will do nothing for you as it can't buy anything in the rural areas. You can buy one onion, one tomato and make *ushatini* if you have margarine or oil. The third thing I like is the fact that rent is not expensive here, actually it is very cheap, (Interview with Doda Mkhaliphi, 15 January 2011).

A single trip to eShowe town from Phili's home in the rural areas costs R20. In addition to the R 40 return busfare, they still do not have proper forms of public transport like buses or taxis; instead they use vans. When she goes to buy groceries in town, she has to pay for the space taken by her groceries in the van as well, for example a 10kg grocery item (whether it be rice, sugar flour, beans, potatoes or mealie meal) costs R3 each. This means that if a person is buying all of the above mentioned items, then s/he already has to pay R12 for transport in addition to his or her busfare. If one buys a 25 kg grocery item, it costs R7 to have it in the van. One pack of cement cost R20 each to have it in the van. A goat costs R20 to transport in the van. When I asked if it makes a difference to carry your 10kg pack in your lap, the answer was, firstly it's impossible to do that in a van because of the number of the people who get transported in one van at the same time and secondly the mere fact of having it with you in a van is enough to make you pay. Whether one carries it in the lap or on one's head while sitting in a van, s/he has to pay for the transportation of that item. This means that one does not even begin to think about going to town if s/he has not sat down and done his or her calculations right (Interview with Phili Ngcobo, 22 January 2011).

Considering the fact that these are the kind of items that people in the rural and urban areas buy on a monthly basis, it really makes living a struggle for anyone living in the rural areas. Many families in the rural areas have large households; they prefer to buy groceries in large quantities. One 10kg or two 10 kg packs per month are a normal amount consumed by an average size African family in the urban areas. These are some of the reasons why people,

especially young people, have decided to come to urban areas and remain even when there are no job opportunities readily available (Interview with Samke Zulu, 22 January 2011; Interview with Phili Ngcobo, 22 January 2011).

A research study by Dinkelman and Pirouz (2002) argued that the reason why the expanded definition of unemployment should be taken into account is that there may be a link between the two definitions. As the economy starts creating more jobs, people who were previously discouraged from seeking a job may actively begin to seek work. This will then move discouraged work-seekers to the ranks of the “unemployed”. The implication is that, while the number of jobs increasing, unemployment is also increasing. They decisively rejected the idea that non-searching individuals are people out of the labour force. As education improves and unemployment rates fall, people are encouraged to actively seek work because the probability of finding employment rises.

Moving on to looking at unemployment by skills category Lewis (2002:744) has shown that formal job creation for the unskilled and semi-skilled categories of labour has been dismal (see Erasmus, 1999). Altman (2007:10) argued that the rapid expansion of low- and semi-skilled jobs is a function of a growing service economy in sectors like retail, restaurants, and finance and business services. She showed that the ratio of high skilled to low and semi-skilled employment has remained constant over a period of about a decade. The challenge South Africa faces in addressing the unemployment problem is the fact that the country has predominantly low-skilled labour force.

4.4.1 Employment/Unemployment Dualism Disproved

Firstly, it is important to note that the high unemployment rate raises the possibility that many job seekers may not perceive the work they are doing as constituting a “proper job” (Barker, 2007:183). Although the cigarettes and sweets that Thembeni Sikude sells enable her to buy a loaf of bread, she still does not consider it as a source of income. My main argument in this section is that the idea of identifying and discussing “coping strategies of the unemployed” has run out of time. My research findings have established that the same survival strategies which researchers label “coping strategies of the unemployed” are also largely used by individuals who are employed and households which have employed people, as it has been seen above through the story of Mr Alfred Mkhize. The diversification of

livelihood strategies that takes place can be grouped according to the social class that the person or household belongs to. It is not only the working poor who diversify livelihoods but the majority of the South African population. The difference would lie in their class position, i.e. while the working poor might have a casual job during the weekdays and sell fruit and vegetables during the weekends, while also playing monthly *stokfel* and *umholiswano*, s/he might also be relying on social grants to make ends meet.

Among the unemployed and the employed people that I spoke to, there is general agreement that one of the most important ways of finding a job is through social networks. Altman's view which is based on Mlatsheni's (2007) study conducted in Mitchell's Plain/Khayelitsha leans towards my research findings. In this study, 55% of respondents⁷⁵ found their current jobs through friends and relatives. My addition to that would be that space and time matters greatly. In the hostel as well as the rural areas linked to the hostel dwellers, searching for employment through networks is the very first option. As correctly argued by Erasmus (1999) and Barker (1992, 1995), a large percentage of the unemployed rely on the support of family members, relatives and friends. According to Standing *et al.* (1996) some workers enter and remain in employment for longer than intended because relatives are unemployed, which implies that the unemployed relatives depend on the employed relatives. Blacks have been proven to have the highest dependency on relatives when compared to other racial groupings, especially in rural households (Erasmus, 1999).

Finding casual jobs is answer number one for almost every person who has moved from the rural to the urban areas. What is interesting is that in their search for casual jobs, they are actually not looking for the same things. Expectations vary from one person to another, as the following extract shows:

Samke is a 25 year old woman who now lives with her boyfriend, who is also the father of her child. He provides her with accommodation as well as everything she needs since she is not working.

Nomkhosi: What did you say you were coming here to do when you left home?

Samke: I came to look for *amatoho*. I looked for a long time without finding anything.

⁷⁵ In this case, I was led to believe that the majority of the respondents were African because of the site of investigation's racial demographics.

Nomkhosi: When your aunt stopped working as a domestic worker why did you not take over from her job?

Samke: I have done domestic work and the problem was that I felt like a slave in that place. Now I know that I cannot cope working as a domestic worker.

Nomkhosi: Why?

Samke: There is too much work in the domestic arena.

Nomkhosi: You felt like a slave? Did you live there?

Samke: Yes. The work never ends in that place. I started working in the morning till the night. You find that I would be done by eight but at eight they would call me and tell me to come wash the dishes. Sometimes it would take me two to three hours to wash the dishes.

Nomkhosi: It took you that long?

Samke: Yes, I am not talking about a dish, I mean dishes. Perhaps you do not know the life of Indians, when an Indian woman is cooking, she takes out every kind of a dish she has and uses it, so that it why it took long to wash dishes because after that I would have to dry them and put them back in the cabinets where they belonged.

Nomkhosi: How much did you get paid there?

Samke: We had agreed on R800 per month but I did not even finish a month working there, it was only one week.

Nomkhosi: Did you get paid for that?

Samke: Yes I got paid R200. After that I stayed for a while and then did security guard training, this is what I have for now (Interview with Samke Zulu, 22 January 2011).

The story of Samke shows vividly that the situations and expectations of people vary enormously. While Doda (story above) appreciated R2 because he could eat from it, Samke left an R800 per month job because she felt like a slave working there, while her aunt was able to do the job and hold on to it until she got something better. Samke's story brings me back to Bonner's (1990) argument that women prefer informal work to work like domestic work. I agree with Bonner on two accounts. The first one is that many women work seven days a week in their preferred informal work. They do so because they want to get the maximum output compared to domestic service where the 'madam' will tell them when to come and when not to as well as how much they will get paid at the end of the month. No matter how much you can work hard for 'madam' you will always get the agreed income whereas in informal work, the harder you work, the better your chances of making more money. The second issue is that in informal work, the worker has a sense of ownership of the business, no matter how small it is, whereas in domestic service, you are always serving somebody, working in somebody's space. In informal work you can claim your space. While informal work can be as hard as in the domestic arena or even more (i.e. "like a slave"), the differences in ownership of produce and space and determining your own pace of work are very important to the worker.

This presents a strong argument for South African trade unions to have a direct and productive relationship with the unemployed and the informally employed. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu)'s⁷⁶ shrinking membership is an indication of a decrease in formal employment in South Africa. However, this should not be the only reason why the trade unions should forge relations with the informally employed and the unemployed.⁷⁷

4.5 The Role of Livestock in Livelihoods Procurement

Unlike the study by Ainslie (2002) in Eastern Cape which looked at cattle production and ownership in isolation from goats, sheep and other stock owned by rural people, this study looks at the stock comprehensively as it understands the importance of the relationships that exist between these stocks and livelihoods procurement, as well as the spiritual and traditional roles. Land and livestock in South Africa especially among the African population carries immense historical, symbolical, political and traditional meaning which cannot be divorced from the concept of rural-urban connections and livelihoods procurement. The lives of the majority of South African Black population cannot be divorced from the rural areas regardless of where they currently live; it can be in the hostels, townships, city centre, or suburbs, etc. The symbolic, political and traditional meanings that are attached to the role of land and livestock are continuously evolving. Other than the fact that culture changes, challenges emerged with regards to land and livestock ownership, i.e. drought, livestock theft, lack of government support mechanisms, and a shortage of people who are interested in taking care of land and livestock. While some literature in South Africa argues that rural

⁷⁶ My discussion on the trade union movement and migrant workers is limited to Cosatu, not only because it is the biggest union federation and because of its affiliation with the ANC-led government which is a controversial issue on its own, but mainly because Cosatu has data available for discussion and analysis.

⁷⁷ "The economic "solutions" to inequality and poverty subscribed to by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank "help to create a dual economy in which there are pockets of wealth.... But a dual economy is not a developed economy". It is the reproduction of dual, unequal economies as effects of globalization that render poorer societies more vulnerable to the "culture of conditionality", through which what is purportedly the granting of loans turns, at times, into the peremptory enforcement of policy. These dual economies claim to sustain diverse worlds of opportunity, consisting of global villages, silicon valleys and oases of outsourcing dotted across the North and the South... dual economies create divided worlds in which uneven and unequal conditions of development can often mask the ubiquitous, underlying factors of persistent poverty and malnutrition, caste and racial injustices, the hidden injuries of class, the exploitation of women's labor, and the victimization of minorities and refugees" (Fanon, 1961:xii).

economies are going through what has been called 'deagrarianisation' (Jacobs, 2004; Francis, 2000), others maintain that the role of land and livestock is larger bigger than is appreciated (Shackelton, *et al*, 2001, Ainslie, 2002; James, 2001).

My research found that the keeping of livestock is not so much for utility reasons, i.e. the provision of milk, and cow dung which is used for polishing floors but mainly for storing wealth. A few households still use milk and maas from cows although this is not the primary reason why livestock is kept. Cattle were also important because their dung could be used as floor polish. Cow dung could only be used while the dung was wet. The main reason for the decline in this practice is that households in the rural areas no longer build their houses in the traditional rural fashion (with mud and/or thatch). The traditional rural fashion was not only about the shape of the house, but the flooring as well as the furniture contained in that house or room. These days, the shape might be old fashioned, but the floor and furniture would resemble the norm in the urban areas. So for example, instead of cow dung, one would have a floor mat bought in retail stores in town; instead of the *icansi* (mat), one would put tiles or cement floor and use polish bought from retail stores.

In relation to the point above, the level at which livestock is used to measure one's prestige and status is declining. People have found different ways of measuring prestige and status. For example, the material used to build one's house and the size of the house, if one has a car and what kind it is, what schools or institutions the children attend and what kind of work they do or where do they work. If you have a lot of livestock but drive an old car and have uneducated and even unemployed children, then you are not necessarily recognised as a person with high status. However this kind of situation is rare, because livestock also assists the owner to educate children and buy a beautiful car and so forth.

Livestock, specifically cows, used to be used for agricultural farming, but this is not the case anymore in the areas studied. Instead, people use tractors to work the land. They hire the tractor from the local owner for a certain amount of money which is determined by the size of land that needs work. What was understood as a limitation of using a tractor is that it demands that the person who needs it has cash to pay the owner. It became a point of frustration if one had to pay for the tractor to work the land and then drought hit the area. This translates into a double loss, because the person has paid for something that is not yielding a result. On the other hand, the advantage of using a tractor vs. livestock is that the

tractor can work from morning until the next morning, compared to livestock which gets tired and strained. The tractor just needs a driver and diesel.

Ritual slaughter seemed to be the most important reason for livestock production and ownership. Selling livestock for cash seemed to be the second main reason because it was flexible. With regards to the payment of *lobolo*, almost all of the livestock owners (mostly elderly men) were married already. Asked if they could give their sons their livestock for *lobolo*, all said they would, but on certain terms and conditions.

When one migrant was asked why he kept livestock, he responded:

It is like our bank. Through land and livestock, people in the rural areas do not need money. Livestock is used for many things, traditional and ritual ceremonies, i.e. wedding, funerals (Interview with Mr Phiwokuhe Dlamini, 27 May 2009).

This was an interesting response because in the urban areas, most people have some kind of relationship with a bank, but in the rural areas the bank is the land and livestock. One does not have to be formally employed or even be employed at all to have a relationship with a bank. For some, the relationship is based on the fact that they get their social grants through the bank. Other than that, they would probably not have a relationship with the bank or a bank account. Some people go to a bank when they are in need of a loan, while some keep their investments in the bank. This shows that there are many different kinds of relations that different people have with a bank, almost like the livestock. When there is a funeral or wedding in the rural areas, the families slaughter livestock and use their crops to prepare food for the people who attend the special ceremony taking place. In the urban areas, when there is a funeral or a wedding, people go to the bank to apply for a loan and occasionally to cash in their investment(s) in order to perform the special ceremony- with the cash they get from the bank they buy the animal(s) to be slaughtered as well as food to be enjoyed by the people who would be attending the ceremony.

All the respondents said that livestock lost during drought had not been replaced. Some have been discouraged from keeping livestock because of the losses that they suffered during the drought. Many are satisfied with having a limited number of livestock, i.e. five cows and approximately ten goats; when they start accumulating more livestock, they sell it and keep the cash instead. Guy (1990) explained the deep-seated and complex power laden issues

entangled in the process of livestock ownership. Surplus livestock is not only a source of food, leather, and transport but also a medium of exchange and sacrifice and a means of obtaining sexual satisfaction and securing many wives (1990:37). Livestock could be exchanged for woman's productive capacity in agriculture and her reproductive capacity to create future labourers [children] (1990:40).

Migrants from the rural areas go to the urban areas to work in order to get a wage to support their family in the rural areas. Migrants who still have livestock and land go back home to use these resources when a special ceremony is held. The cash they earn in the urban areas merely complements already existing strategies. It has been highlighted above in the words of a young female migrant that 'nobody burns incense in the hostel', implying that some cultural practises do not belong in some places.

4.6 The Role of Land in Livelihoods Procurement

Much of the literature on 'land'⁷⁸ issues' in South Africa post-1994 has focused on what has been loosely called the 'land question' (see Ntsebeza, 2004; Ntsebeza and Hall, 2007; Lahiff, 2008); however I am concerned with the role that land plays in the lives of the migrants and their families on a day-to-day basis. This refers to the land they currently have, regardless of whether it is big or small or whether it was attained through the land reform programme or not.

Yes we have land in the rural areas. We have a garden although our wives do not want to work the land. They are lazy because they know that their husbands are working. Instead they like going to buy from the big retail stores and showing off to their neighbours. What I believe is basic groceries is 80 kg of mealie-meal, oil and beans, everything else can follow. With those ingredients, people will never go hungry. When I am at home I do not like to live the way people live here [in the urban areas] or even eat the same kind of food. For example I do not see the need to buy juice. I do not mind if they buy it but basics come first... My father works the land. ... Produce is reducing because of expensive food. We have goats and cows and livestock produce is decreasing because it is expensive to buy more livestock (Interview with Mr Bhekisisa Maphumulo, 12 March 2009).

⁷⁸ The findings on land and livestock usage by migrants are based on primary research done in northern KwaZulu-Natal (i.e. eShowe, Nongoma, eMpangeni and Hlabisa) between 2009 and 2011.

There at least two main sets of discourses that argues against each other in terms of the relevance of land⁷⁹ as a major form of livelihoods procurement. One set argues that the role of land is continuously diminishing as a major form of making a living. In contrast, the other set argues that land⁸⁰ still forms the core feature of the livelihoods procurement of the people of South Africa. Both sets acknowledge the role played by the remittances of the migrant workers; again some argue that this only makes a small mark on well-being and livelihoods especially of the people who reside in the rural areas, while others argue that migrant workers remit a reasonable amount of their incomes to the rural areas. Whatever position one takes in these debates, it seems relevant to insist that “land represents a sense of security, identity and history rather than just an asset to be used for farming alone [or to be sold]” (James, 2001:93). My research found that the role of land in the diversification of livelihoods is continuously diminishing. While the significance of land was acknowledged by all participants, they all said that land is not used the same way it was some time ago. This puts more pressure on the migrants. Some migrants said that their wives are now lazy to work the land and rely on the cash that migrants send monthly, as the excerpt above indicates. While changing climate conditions can be blamed for this, the fact that women have been migrating in numbers can also be considered a reason for the land not being used as an effective way of making a living. Sometimes there are few people interested in or fit to work the land because of the drift to the urban areas in search of job opportunities and schooling. If a male figure

⁷⁹ It should be noted that the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act no. 108 of 1991, while removing segregationary legislation, did not seek actively to reverse the effects of that legislation. Affirmative action in the economic and political fields was not converted into schemes to undo the *apartheid* city. Even the government’s urban land restitution programme was stalled, with few properties restored to those forcibly removed during the apartheid era. Residential integration between 1991 and 1996 was essentially left to market forces, accompanied by occasional land invasions. As the vast majority of the African population was extremely poor and so unable to purchase property in the former White areas, it is scarcely surprising that the White population was able to defend ‘its’ territory with a high level of success (Christopher, 2001:454).

⁸⁰ The Native Land Act of 1913 “legalised the earlier theft of land, created a huge marginal peasantry, and left it with little option but to turn into captive labor force. Then there was a complex set of pass laws which simultaneously prohibited blacks from moving about the country to get the best job on the best available terms in a free market and branded those without employment as vagrants” (Mamdani, 1996:227). The Act exacerbated poverty in the rural areas, forcing some members of the household to leave home to go find other ways of making a living in order to support the household. The effects of the Act are still vividly seen and strongly felt among the millions of Black South Africans. This is because the land that was stolen was never returned to its owners. Whereas it took just one piece of legislation to destroy things for Black people, it is now taking the current government several policies and programmes to try and restore the land.

still exists, land is not owned by women⁸¹, even though in some cases they work the land. Fathers, uncles and sons get to own land. Although women would say *ukhona umhlaba ekhaya*, meaning there is land at home, this is something that belongs to the whole family as it benefits the whole family and everybody in the household is generally expected to work on the land. Again, this brings a sense of security and belonging for the family.

A relevant example is a scenario that took place in the area where I conducted my research at Nongoma. There is a general agreement that the rain did not come as it used to in the past couple of years, therefore the land which used to be utilised for agricultural farming has been to a large extent 'neglected'. By 'neglected' I mean it has not been in used in any way, i.e. they have not ploughed; and the remaining livestock has not been able to graze from that land. To the naked eye, it looks very dry and eroded. Ploughed fields are usually very large pieces of land. Often, fields are almost joined together, while belonging to different families from the same tribal area.

In this area the Bhengu family decided that since they do not use fields any more, they would sell them to people who wanted to buy land for residential purposes. When I say 'Bhengu family' I am referring to an extended family which is a combination of more than five 'nuclear families'. This decision came to the attention of the community. The community was not at all happy; their main concern was that the fields would be sold to people who were not originally from that area. The community argued that this would be problematic because the community does not know where those people come from and the reasons for those people leaving their previous place. The community's main concerns were safety and security. They felt that they could really not trust people from the outside of their tribal area. They pointed out that since 'new people' had started moving into to their space, criminal activities had increased. Again, in this case we can see the same mentality that hostel dwellers have about outsiders, who tend to be seen as criminals.

A few weeks after I heard about that scenario, I called Gogo Mthembu, the household head of the family that I lived with when I was at Nongoma, to check how she was doing and she told

⁸¹ Gogo Mthembu was widowed in 1981 but she still refers to everything in her household as belonging to the late Mr Mthembu. Xolile Dumakude, a 30 year old woman with three children, unmarried and unemployed, lives with her sisters and their children. Their parents passed away and they do not have a brother. She told me that the livestock and land that they have belongs to her father and she cannot claim ownership, although she is the oldest living daughter.

me that one night, one of the rooms which are not occupied by anybody in her household was broken into and house accessories and housewares were stolen from that room. These are her valuables which she told me during my stay she was keeping for her grandson's wedding. The thieves came during the night and stole as much as they could carry and then left without going into the main house where *gogo* was sleeping with her two grandchildren and one great grandchild. Five of *gogo*'s children passed away few years ago and the one remaining is a widowed son who lives at Mandeni. *Gogo* stressed that crime rate is rising in this area.

With regards to the selling of fields, the community gave the Bhengu family the option of building on that land for their children and grandchildren instead of selling the space to unknown people. Discussion took place at a series of community meetings which were facilitated by the community members but primarily led by a retired man (Mr Siyabonga Maseko) who had worked in the urban areas for almost 30 years. This man was also a political activist for a political party that was not the ruling party at Nongoma at that time. After a long series of family discussions and community meetings, the Bhengu family agreed not to sell pieces of their land.

4.6.1 The Role of Water Supply in the Rural Areas

While water pipes are now within the reach of millions of people, many of them cannot afford the user fees (Marais, 2011) The role of water supply in the rural areas of KZN has been partly demonstrated by Mam Lungile Dubazane's interview extract above, but this story, as interesting as it is, it is not necessarily representative of all women in rural KZN. Many, unlike Mam' Dubazane have given up on agricultural farming, primarily because of water shortages and also because of health/age related factors, to focus on different ways of making a livelihood. For example, *Gogo* Mthembu is a pensioner, who lives with her grandchildren who are all attending school. She has a field that she does not use because of weather conditions. She does not have livestock as it all perished during the dry seasons. Her secondary livelihood strategy is selling at the local schools that her grandchildren go to. She has been doing this for more than ten years (Interview with Gogo Mthembu, 17 August 2010).

Unlike in Eastern Cape, the impact of drought in KwaZulu-Natal, more specifically in the areas studied has not just caused fluctuations in rainfall (Ainslie, 2002) instead, it has reduced the level of usage of land and livestock in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The level at which water is accessible in the rural areas says a lot about the role that land and livestock play in livelihoods procurement. It is important to understand that water is needed for consumption purposes (cooking, drinking, washing, bathing and laundry) as well as productive purposes (kitchen gardens, livestock and farming). In most of the households I found that people are now only able to have kitchen gardens as compared to fields because there is not enough water to cover the hectares of land they have. One of the conclusions that can be reached is that an adequate water supply in the rural areas can uplift the lives of not only the poor but all the people in rural areas.

4.6.2 Urbanisation as a Reason for the Decline in Agriculture

Barker (2007:43) has argued that ... most people do not keep livestock anymore because household elders are working and the children go to school; as a result there is nobody who is able to look after the livestock.

But other than the weather conditions, what I feel have had a big influence in diminishing the role of agricultural farming is education. Although there are still a few people here at Nongoma whom when you go to a shop would ask you to read the price for because they are illiterate, but that is a tiny portion. The Nongoma people took education seriously because when we came it was really bad in 1960. So they got educated after that, they are the ones now filling the urban areas and the tertiary institutions. As a result now people cannot get their matric and then come back to work the land, this is how I understand our current situation. You also cannot spend your money educating your children and then tell them to come back and work the land. This is one of the main reasons for the decline in agricultural farming. Nobody can allow her children to get education and then come back to square one like you, that's impossible.

With livestock it's a bit different because a boy instead of going to school can go and be a shepherd for a certain family's livestock knowing that at the end of the year he would earn a cow. His livestock would then reproduce, he would then go back to his home and get married, and this is what was known to the people. But now the people have changed and the situations have changed as well. I also do not wish that my child can finish matric or more and then come back work on the land just like me. I am sorry. I also would like them to be like those who sit in the offices and have very cold air when it is hot and very warm air when it is cold. This is what is needed. Otherwise if there was a way that they could help us with access to water, then each and every home would have a garden. People now only produce mealie meal but

when it comes to vegetables, is not good. Water is a big problem, (Interview with Mrs Lungile Dubazane from Nongoma, 16 August 2010).

Mam Dubazane and her family arrived in Nongoma in 1960, while she was of school-going age. She is a hard-working woman and, as will be seen below, she uses a couple of survival strategies to make ends meet for her extended family.

4.7 The Role of Social Assistance

The third key point regards social assistance as a paradoxical form of livelihoods procurement especially in the lives of women. Social grants have come to play a significant role in the lives of poor South Africans. Although not all poor South Africans have access to social grants, most households have at least one person who receives some form of grant. South Africa does not have a universal social security framework; instead it has what is referred to as a comprehensive social security system in the form of means-tested payments to protect against particular stages of the life cycle and certain contingencies. Social assistance means a grant in terms of the Republic of South Africa Social Assistance Act, 2003. A grant means income support awarded to an eligible beneficiary. A beneficiary means a person who receives social assistance (Social Assistance Act, 2003).

Table 4.1 Grants and Amounts

	Social Grant	Amount
1.	Old Persons Grant (Old Age Grant) ⁸²	R 1 140
2.	Disability Grant	R 1 140
3.	War Veteran's Grant	R 1 160
4.	Grant-in-aid	R 260
5.	Child Support Grant	R 260
6.	Foster Child Grant	R 740
7.	Care-dependency grant	R1 140

Accessed from www.sassa.gov.za 11 January 2012

⁸² If the beneficiary is more than 75 years old, s/he receives R20 more per month.

The table above shows the different grants and the current amounts that the beneficiaries receive. These amounts were effective from 01 April 2011.

4.7.1 Basic Income Grant Debate

A universal income grant, known as the Basic Income Grant (BIG) or “solidarity grant” was proposed in the late 1990s, leading to the formation of the BIG Coalition 2001. This coalition was formed to develop a common platform among advocates of a universal income support grant and to mobilise popular support for the introduction of the grant.⁸³ This proposal was largely endorsed and actively campaigned for by, among others; a wide range of civil society organisations, Cosatu, and the Taylor Committee of Enquiry for Comprehensive Social Security (Standing and Samson, 2003). A grant was proposed that would be paid monthly to every individual as a right of citizenship, without any form of means test. It was proposed that it start at R100 per person per month. This seemed to be the best possible way to tackle poverty as well as strengthen social solidarity. Basically this was understood as a *right to income security* (Standing and Samson, 2003:3). BIG advocates departed from section 27 (1) c of the Constitution in proposing and substantiating BIG. This section argues that “everyone has the right to have access to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance”. In (2) it says “The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights”. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) is said to be one of the most progressive in the world (Peberdy, 2008; Shefer, *et al.*, 2008) protecting the human rights of all, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, nationality or immigration status. It obliges the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights (Republic of South Africa, Social Assistance Bill, 2003).

While the South African government commissioned the Taylor Commission to research this issue and make recommendations, it did not accept the BIG proposal although the Commission recommended that BIG be rolled-out because of the need to reduce poverty. The government used a couple of arguments to dismiss the BIG proposal. The first was that

⁸³ www.big.org.za accessed 11 January 2012

rolling out BIG would be expensive and the state could not afford it. Secondly, it was concerned with the grant not being properly targeted since it was supposed to be universal. Thirdly BIG was criticised on the assumption that it would become “uncontrollable with benefits rising as a result of populist political moves” (Standing and Samson, 2003:13). Fourthly, was a “disincentive to labour”. Handing out the grant to everyone without them doing anything in return would create lazy citizens. Finally, it was argued that “the payment of a guaranteed solidarity grant to workers would allow employers to lower wages and increase ‘exploitation’ of workers” (Standing and Samson, 2003:14). Contrary to the five above-mentioned points, Standing and Samson documented five advantages for the South African community; i.e. advantages for children; women; the unemployed; social equity and for the economy.

Whereas I was among the BIG critics in the mid-2000s; I must acknowledge that after conducting this rich historical and critical ethnography on migrants and their livelihoods in KwaZulu-Natal, I have seen that social grants play a bigger and more important role than I previously understood (see Xulu, 2005). My ethnography has proven to me the relevance of situating yourself in the circumstances that you are researching. In my Master’s thesis I had argued against the implementation of the BIG based on three grounds. Firstly I argued that BIG would promote the dependency culture, just like the migrant labour system made Black people depend solely on wage labour. Secondly, I argued that South Africa has never really been a welfare state and that welfare states have faced major challenges throughout the world. Thirdly, I argued that getting people to work and giving them the means to be active and productive should be a priority. I argued that more can be done with state intervention like the Public Works Programme (PWP). The PWP cannot simply be substituted for a BIG, especially since the welfare state has been argued to be an ineffective method of addressing mass unemployment, extreme poverty and responsible for many challenges in the developing countries (*ibid.*).

4.7.2 Social Grants and the Gender Dimension

The availability of social grants especially to young, rural, unemployed, unskilled women has enabled them to become more mobile than in the past. Social assistance in South Africa has a gendered dimension and as a result, it tends to have a substantial positive impact on

household poverty (Mosoetsa, 2011; Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007; Burns *et al.*, 2005; Posel, 2001) especially the old age pension and the child maintenance grant. With regards to the old age pension grant, Burns *et al.* argued that the different age eligibility and the mortality rates for men and women ensure the grant reaches more women than men. However, the amendment of the Social Assistance Act 2004 saw men aged 63-64 for the first time qualifying and receiving old age pension. The full implementation of the Act ensured that from 2010 men too receive an old age pension when they turn 60 (Social Development, 2010/11). This means that male migrants were only able to start receiving the pension after they had retired (between ages 64 and 65) and were either in the process of going back to the rural areas or were based in the rural areas. At this stage it is too early to say what positive effects this amendment will have on household members, and whether the existing trends in social grant usage will change or not⁸⁴.

The child support grant⁸⁵ continues to be one of the most widely accessible social grants of all; hence it is seen as a key aspect of the South African government's poverty alleviation programme (Burns, *et al.*, 2005). It is widely accepted in South Africa that it is women who assume the primary responsibility of care of the children; as a result they are the ones who normally are in the position to apply and qualify to receive the child support grant. It is also a cause of tension between men and women. My research has shown that many young mothers do not always use the child support grant to take care of the needs of their child or children; instead they use it for their own personal needs and the burden of child care is usually left to the grandparents (see Mosoetsa, 2011; 2005; Burns, *et al.*, 2005). This is an excuse sometimes used by men not to support their children.

⁸⁴ In order to apply for the Older Person's grant, the applicant must be a South African citizen/permanent resident; be resident in South Africa; if a male, must be 63 years or older; if a female, must be 60 years or older; and spouse must comply with the means test; must not be maintained or cared for in a State Institution; must not be in receipt of another social grant for him or herself. As a way of bridging the gendered dimension of the social assistance, SASSA said "All South African Males aged 61 and 62 years will qualify for Grant for Older Person from April 2009; males aged 60 years will qualify for Grant for Older Persons from April 2010; provided they meet the above criteria" accessed from <http://www.sassa.gov.za/Grant-for-older-persons-668.aspx> 11 January 2012

⁸⁵ In order to apply for the Child Support grant, the primary care giver must be a South African citizen or permanent resident; both the applicant and the child must reside in South Africa; applicant must be the primary care giver of the child/children concerned; the child/children must be under the age of 15 years; the applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test; cannot apply for more than six non biological children and the child cannot be cared for in state institution. Accessed from <http://www.sassa.gov.za/Child-support-grant-673.aspx> 11 January 2012

During the interviews, women acknowledged the huge role played by social grants in their households, whether be it the old age pension, CSG, disability grant or foster care grant (see Mosoetsa, 2011; 2005). Men on the other hand claimed not to even know the amount of social grants received by women and what they used them for. Men claimed that they do not reduce or limit the amount they remit home because of the social grants being received by women. Social assistance has also been seen by some scholars (Meth, 2004; Standing and Samson, 2004) as creating conducive conditions for people to go out and seek employment. They use this income to go to different places to seek work and sometimes to prepare the relevant documents (Curriculum Vitae, etc.) for a job search. Women are able to travel from rural areas to urban areas and vice versa, relying on this income for bus fares and later for livelihood while unemployed in the urban areas.

The social grants that seem to be playing the most influential role in terms of the changes in gender, generational and household changes are the child support grant and old age pension (see Mosoetsa, 2011; 2005). The foster care and dependency grants seem to be secondary. Having access to these grants has given women a degree of power within their households, which most of them did not have before, the power to purchase, to make decisions and the power to change life circumstances. While the availability of these grants makes it easier for women to attain some level of power, on the other hand it makes the burden much heavier for them. A grant that normally belongs to an individual does not become an individual's business but the household tends to benefit from it in one way or another. As Mosoetsa (2011; 2005) and Burns *et al.*, (2005) put it, where there is a pensioner, household sizes tend to increase, and there is an increased burden of care of grandchildren. The middle generation is forced to migrate in search of work or have passed away due to HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*). Unemployed children tend to attach themselves to the pensioner of the household as part of their survival strategy (*ibid.*). In addition I argue that the elderly (especially women) also tend to suffer from domestic violence and become vulnerable to criminals because of their monthly pensions (Mosoetsa, 2011; 2005). Burns *et al.* argued that the households that mainly rely on social grants are not only Black and poorer but they are also larger in size. "The extension of the size of the extended family is not views as a strategy for survival by most people. It is views, rather, as a natural phenomenon. Cultural or traditional values are generally cited as the reason for accepting additional household members. Women consider it as part of their extended parental responsibilities", (Mosoetsa, 2011:26).

The issue of social grants is another reason for women to come to the urban areas to seek the Department of Social Development (DSD) services provided by the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA). As from 01 April 2006, the responsibility for the management, administration and payment of social assistance grants was transferred to SASSA. They come to the urban areas because they believe the services are more effective and efficient compared to the rural areas. For some of them, the DSD/SASSA offices are too far from where they reside, there are always long queues and the service is poor. Once they have accomplished what they came for, they often stay in the urban areas; instead they find new reasons why they need to remain in the urban areas. Perhaps one of the most important things that can bind them together is the mere fact of being 'women'. They are regarded as a 'vulnerable group', mainly because of high HIV/AIDS infection rates, unemployment, and casual and informal employment, as well as the patriarchal nature of our society and the resultant effects which are gender-based violence and poor reproductive health.

4.7.3 The Paradox

Social assistance can be said to have ambiguous effects on the changes that are taking place with regards to gender relations (specifically relations between men and women), household sizes and generational relations (specifically between parents and children of prime age). Firstly, there is the issue of the shrinking size of households. This is associated with the fact that young women are now more mobile as a result of the financial muscle obtained through social grants. They go out and forge nuclear families and sometimes are forced to fall back on single parent households, until they return back home (extended families) because of pressing situations either due to health and/or financial reasons (see Mosoetsa, 2005; 2011).

Secondly there is the issue of what Mosoetsa (2011) calls 'clustering'. This is where family members come together in order to benefit from each other in times of difficulty. Bozzoli's research in the early 1980s already showed that there was a time when African families, specifically women who had moved to the cities had to go back home to rely on the pensions of their mothers to take care of themselves as well as their children (1991: 239; see also 1999). This shows that clustering as a result of the grant(s) is not new; it is a continuation which happens in changing times and circumstances. Bozzoli wrote at a time when the

unemployment rate was not as high, the child support grant in its current shape and amount was not in place, the scale of women migration was not the same and finally the RDP and CRU housing was not in effect. Households are clearly being reshaped and recomposed. Transitions occur between all types of households (Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007).

Thirdly, families in the rural areas reported that some family members “only know *ugogo* [or *umkhulu*] when she has to get the grant at the end of the month”. This means that the elderly does not get support and love from family members on a day-to-day basis but only when they get their payment. The family members do this because they know that they will get some cash from the elderly when they get their grants. Fourthly abuse and gender based violence have been directed at the recipients of social grants. This comes from sons and grandsons and sometimes daughters and granddaughters who demand a share if not all of the grant. Clearly the role of social assistance is praiseworthy, but it must also be acknowledged that it is also plays a contradictory and ambiguous role in the lives of the beneficiaries and households as a whole. Below is an example of the role played by the social grant in the life of Mrs Lungile Dubazane from Nongoma. She is a widow, who lives with her grandchildren while their parents are in the urban areas, some working, some searching for work and some attending tertiary institutions.

Nomkhosi: Do these children get social grants?

Mam Dubazane: Yes.

Nomkhosi: Who gets those social grants?

Mam Dubazane: I get grants for three and the other two gets paid to their parents.

Nomkhosi: Do those parents give you that amount when they get it?

Mam Dubazane: Yes, they do that a lot and they give over and above the social grants. They are not the kind of children who get grants and spend them in their own things; they bring it to me and even give me more when they have casual jobs.

Nomkhosi: Do they have a set amount that they give to you every month or they give you any amount?

Mam Dubazane: They give me any amount, there is no set amount. I am not somebody who would ask or demand money from them; they see or decide for themselves on that issue. But there is oldest who is struggling with piece jobs and the youngest one is not working as I said.

Nomkhosi: That means that is just two main people who really give you money?

Mam Dubazane: Yes, or I can say there is actually three of them.

Nomkhosi: Do they give you separately or together?

Mam Dubazane: They give me separately, anytime when one has it, s/he gives it to me, unless they have some pressures on their side. But they are not children who do not pay attention to this household, they take care of it.

Nomkhosi: How much do they normally give you?

Mam Dubazane: No, it comes to a thousand Rands or more, it depends on when they give me ...

Nomkhosi: Do you get a pension?

Mam Dubazane: Yes.

Nomkhosi: How do you use the grants?

Mam Dubazane: Grants and pension all come in one amount then I buy all household needs from that amount.

Nomkhosi: Which includes food?

Mam Dubazane: Yes and clothes and save in case there is a health-related emergency.

Nomkhosi: What do you do with the money you get from your children because you are able to cover the household needs with social grants and pension?

Mam Dubazane: That is never enough; there is always a need for cash, although I said they give me cash but I cannot say that it satisfies me, the rand has no value. It would have been better if the government had made different retail stores for different people. For example, the people who gets paid the minimum of R5000 should have their own shops that they buy from and people who get more money should buy from more expensive shops, those who get R20 000 a month. In my case I buy OMO (washing power) from a shop together with a squmama (wealthy person) who gets R20 000 a month, that is not right, the government was wrong on that, he did not think properly on that issue. There should be certain programmes that he makes which takes care of the poor people and people who are rich and those who are in the middle and those who are poor should not all be eating from the same pot. Because at the end of the day, although I get grants, pension and the support from children, I still do not feel happy about my situation, as it is you would not be sitting in that kind of a sofa if the rand had any value, suddenly one hears that it has lost value. One should be able to afford all basic needs and still have little money saved aside. Sometimes it happens that one has flu and one cannot even go to the doctor because she does not have money; this is all about the value of the rand. As for me, there is not even hand-work that I can do because I am gugile (very old) now. I normally try to do amacansi (mats) and find that within a short-while I feel back pain. There is a garden, can you see it over the window, and it kills me as there is no water. But in the radio we are always told that one home one garden, while they do not supply us with water. ...

Nomkhosi: So what do you do about the availability of water?

Mam Dubazane: That really negatively affects me because as it is I have to cross the road to get the water that is when the flu got hold of me. I have to get into the water and dip my bucket in it.

Nomkhosi: Why would you get in it?

Mam Dubazane: It's a dam and not a tap where you easily and conveniently get water. The taps that they installed for us are useless, they are really failing to deliver water as sometimes we go for a month without having water from the tap. When there is no water from the tap, one has to see for herself where she gets water from. That is why I easy catch flu because the conditions of life are harsh.

Nomkhosi: But your garden is doing well?

Mam Dubazane: Yes I am trying, but since I made those seedbeds, the rain has not come even for once because that is where we used to depend on for our gardens. Now they keep on telling us that each home should have a garden but they do not provide us with water.

Nomkhosi: But you would recommend one to have a garden?

Mam Dubazane: Yes a lot because as it is I do not buy cabbage, in the next few days my onions would come alright and I am able to get my fresh food from my garden. I

can go there anytime and get my carrots from it. But for the first time in my life I have been experiencing a huge challenge of rats in the garden.

Nomkhosi: What do they do?

Mam Dubazane: They eat the very same food I plant for myself and family. I have learnt a lesson that I did not know before. You know as you are learning I am also learning in life and my knowledge of gardening is getting enhanced. People (Christians) always say *izinyoni zezulu azitshali azilimi kodwa ziyadla*⁸⁶; those people say that not knowing that we are the ones who do the work for them since they eat our food from the garden

Nomkhosi: How can you say that?

Mam Dubazane: I am telling the truth that I also did not know for a long time. People always quote that scripture especially when there is a person who passed away.

Nomkhosi: Yes I know that scripture⁸⁷

(Interview with Mrs Lungile Dubazane from Nongoma, 16 August 2010).

While Mam Dubazane receives her old age grant as well as the child support grants for some of her grandchildren, her story not only shows the role of social grants across rural-urban connections. She is also involved in informal/self-employment; she also uses land and really believes in its capacity to curb poverty provided that the government supplies the relevant services to make life manageable for people who engage in agricultural farming livelihoods. It tackles the issues of lack of basic service delivery, i.e. water. Most important it shows the value of wage labour, through the remittances from her children based in the urban areas.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the different ways of making a living cannot be separated or distinguished according to whether one is a rural or urban dweller, in formal or informal employment, or engaged in legal or illegal survival strategies. It has shown the intricate

⁸⁶ Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (New International Version Bible)

⁸⁷ Mam Dubazane continued to say “yes but what you do not know is that we are the ones who actually provide the food for lezozinyoni (these birds). I am telling the truth, one day I met a teacher from the nearest school, after greeting each other; we started talking about the gardens and she was asking me how I am coping in my garden since she is suffering a lot of the birds eating her produce while in the garden. Now I really learnt something I did not know. I knew about rats, especially on mealie meal but now they started eating my carrots as well. You can see it when we go to the garden after this. They focus on the green part of the carrots, thereafter the carrots does not have power to continue growing and the carrots ends up not being of good quality. Whereas one day I noticed that they dig the ground and start eating the food while still on the ground. As I am telling you my child, we are the ones who are providing for the *izinyoni zezulu* (birds of air) and they have to labour looking for the food and finding ways of accessing the food and we labour trying to chase them away from our gardens. Those are the lessons I have learnt at this stage. I told the teacher I was talking to, that she has to get plastic packets and post them in her garden so that when these birds and rats move around in the garden they would touch the packet and it makes the noise and they would believe that it is a person and they will they run away”.

relationship between rural and urban areas through a close investigation of the livelihoods of the migrant workers living in the hostel. It has attempted to comprehensively deal with the various ways that people earn a living, both in the rural and urban realm by showing the intertwinement of multiple livelihood strategies. I have found that migrants are, in some instances, poor or rich, landed or landless, with livestock or without livestock, some originate from regions steeped in long migratory traditions and others from those without such traditions (Simone, 2003:5). I argued that whether it is men or women, the young or old, educated and uneducated, they all primarily get involved in these rural-urban movements, migrations and interactions because they are seeking to improve and sometimes diversify their means of livelihood. While interconnected livelihood struggles shape the connections and relations between the rural-urban areas, I do however acknowledge that it not all rural-urban movements are prompted by economic reasons (labour migration); many are caused by non-economic factors⁸⁸, i.e. health (see Andersson, 2001). Kok *et al*, (2003) concurred with those who argued that the only real root cause of migration is economic causes.

The above three stories of the livelihood struggles and challenging situations and difficult choices made by the hostel dwellers cannot be said to have a gender or urban bias because it is precisely the intent of this thesis to show that dichotomous distinctions do not and will not work. “Yet it is important to emphasise that these are not simply ‘case studies’ of the impact of larger economic and political forces. Instead, they represent vantage points for illuminating processes of social and spatial interconnection, and a means for gaining a fuller understanding of the possibilities for social change ” (Hart and Sitas, 2004:37). In each story, life in the rural and urban areas was reflected upon. This was not done in an attempt to create balance, but it was the reality of their histories and interconnected geographies. What seems to be the most important feature in all the three stories starts in their decision to come to the city to look for employment, the role of labour migration. Phili has never worked, Londiwe has worked for about a year or two and Mam Nonhle Kheswa worked from the mid-1980s till late 2000s. Phili came to the city and to the hostel because of her husband. Londiwe came to the city and to the hostel because of the presence of her late female cousin. Mam Nonhle Kheswa came to the city to look for a job and moved into the hostel because of and through

⁸⁸ For example, there is a category of children who follow their parents to the urban areas. There is a category of people who come to the urban areas in order to be close to their loved ones or to take care of them in times of sickness and then there is another group which comes to the urban areas in order to access better health and social services.

her partner. It was easier for Mam Nonhle Kheswa and Londiwe to relocate because they were not married while it was easier for Phili to relocate because she was married to somebody who worked and therefore live in the urban area. Her husband is the only link she has in the urban area.

In short, this chapter has made three important contributions to the labour and livelihoods discussion in South Africa. Rural-urban migration remains important and plays a crucial role in the diversification and multiplication of livelihood strategies of migrants. I have clearly pointed out the role of social grants as a survival strategy for many poor African women. I also pointed out the challenges that this creates in the lives of the beneficiaries. Most importantly, the key argument is that there are collapsing livelihoods both in the rural areas and in the urban areas. I used wage labour as a point of reference regarding the urban areas and land and livestock served as reference point for life in the rural areas.

Throughout, I adopted a mode of explanation that broke the dichotomy between formal models and empirical description. I recognised the underlying causal processes, and pointed out that such processes never operate in isolation; for it is precisely their operation in varying combinations which produces variety and uniqueness. Through discussing the various livelihood strategies used by migrants, I showed the inappropriateness of the “coping strategies of the unemployed” phrase, that no longer holds water. The next chapter will examine the various types of cultural formations at the hostel. I will look at how all the different ways of survival come together at a particular level and get translated and played out through the different roles, responsibilities and relationships that exist among the members of either a household, or a social, cultural, or political formation. I discuss the different formations that integrate and disintegrate people simultaneously.

CHAPTER FIVE

CULTURAL FORMATIONS: GENDERED, SPATIAL, POLITICAL, SPIRITUAL AND FAMILIAL RELATIONS

5. Introduction

“Social scientists in South Africa have for some time been identifying forms of association amongst working people in compounds, hostels or townships. Whether it was social networks of interaction, ‘homeboy’ groups, societies, brotherhoods and cohesive ethnic units, there was consensus at least that black workers engaged in varying ways and degrees in informal organisations and associations” (Sitas, 1983:275).⁸⁹

According to Sitas (1996), there are four dimensions of cultural formations namely, ‘alienation’⁹⁰, disvaluation’, ‘disoralia’ and ‘degendering’. For him, ‘disvaluation’ means an experience of loss and defamiliarization, as normative patterns and reciprocal relationships are challenged in the urban centres, being in essence a disvaluation from the way of life that has been generated through the history of a people, its folklore and meanings. He argued that while there was very little in the institutional life of hostels and factories that facilitated reciprocity, migrants still fought to generate binding norms and values and systems of socialisation (237). ‘Disoralia’ “denotes the pressures that affect the possibility of communication, language, its meaning-generating capacities, the way ordinary migrants’ symbolic capital becomes devalued - a process affecting hundreds of millions of oral people gripped by the tides of noise, distortion and meaning embedded in capitalism’s new spaces. Migrants’ cultural formations create new language contexts, hybrids and creoles, but also cause reactions and revaluations of the most archaic regional dialects as experience becomes patterned through oral forms of communication and authority” (237-8). By ‘degendering’ he

⁸⁹ The only limitation from the quote above is that it looks only at workers’ associations, which immediately leaves out all those who do not work but who are not employed. Throughout this thesis and especially in chapter four I have tried to show that the dualistic framework does not work. Therefore for the purposes of this thesis the quote above would have to be understood to include hostel dwellers and their families in the rural areas.

⁹⁰ According to Macionis and Plummer (2008:105) alienation is the reason why Marx condemned capitalism. Alienation is the *experience of isolation resulting from powerlessness*. Dominated by capitalists and dehumanised by their jobs (especially monotonous and repetitive factory work), proletarians find little satisfaction in, and feel individually powerless to improve, their situation.

refers to the “pressures on gender roles as men and women are thrown into the mill and ground” (238). From the four dimensions around which cultural formations cohere as mentioned above, I want to add the importance of ‘spatial’ and ‘political’ dimensions to this framework. Secondly I want to show the inter-linkages that exist among these different dimensions of cultural formations. Thirdly I argue that these formations converge and divert as much as they are formations and deformations of culture.

It’s important to note that in this chapter I will not explore the first dimension of cultural formation which is ‘alienation’ as part of livelihoods procurement through wage labour. This is because I have thoroughly dealt with various forms of livelihood strategies in chapter four. What is important for me is that while it was relevant for Sitas (1996) to perceive the main livelihood strategy (wage labour) as alienating, these days it is difficult to say who is the employer (or the enemy?), with growing numbers of self-employed and the informal economy⁹¹. Income recipients are not always workers, i.e. social grants. Sitas’s theorising narrowly focused on the employer vs. employee-workplace relations and how the worker is always alienated from the products s/he produces. While the worker was never the owner of the means of production, in chapter four, I show that people/migrants have many different ways of livelihood production; hence there are different kinds of relations, processes and feelings involved in livelihood procurement tasks.

In this chapter I will start by discussing what Sitas calls ‘degendering’. I start with his weakest point of analysis (gender) in order to build from it and extend his theory. In his theorising, he fails to problematise the taken-for-granted roles of men and women in the migrant labour and hostel literature. When he refers to ‘gendering’, his focus is on strength, masculinity and the role of men in the everyday life, specifically livelihoods procurement. Although he acknowledges the way men and women are “thrown into the mill and ground” (238), he never clearly addresses or engages with the role of women and how it complements what was done by men in the urban areas at that time. The intention of this section is to show the complexity of gender at the hostel as well as gender in the rural-urban connections. Most importantly I also want to show that the ‘spatial’ does not come secondarily to gender and/or livelihoods procurement but that these are all interwoven and occur simultaneously as a result

⁹¹ The four ways in which capitalism alienates the worker are not always all applicable to the life of the worker.

of the multiplicity in and of space. Therefore, below I will discuss the different convergences and divergences that men and women, together and separately, perform.

Secondly, I will discuss what Sitas calls 'disoralia', this is communicative means, language, meaning, symbols (cultural) - oral forms of communication, and regional ties. In this section I will discuss ideas of identity and belonging; and spirituality and religion. Again I will demonstrate how gender (men and women), the spatial (rural-urban/hostel-village) and spiritual (Christian-Shembe⁹²) come together or fracture in whatever way that is produced by the migrants and their families. Thirdly, I will discuss the various political foundations as cultural formations, also showing the intertwining of gender, space and politics. I will conclude by showing how all these formations manifest themselves at a household level. This is where I will be trying to apply what Sitas calls 'disvaluation'. I will use 'moralising' to show how people, families, communities and friends find ways and reasons to stick together when everything seems to be against them i.e. HIV-sickness, unemployment-destitution, etc. In short, with this chapter I try to show what was argued by Mosoetsa (2011:116-7) that social, economic and political resources are an integral part of daily and long-term livelihood activities in households and communities. I intend to demonstrate how social alliances and networks, formal or informal are continually reformed and renegotiated in order to respond to the changing social and economic context. Similar to what I attempt to show in this chapter, Mosoetsa takes seriously the idea that households should not be seen as the only resource at the disposal of the poor in their livelihood struggles, but organisations also offer social, economic and political resources (p.84). On this note it is crucial to continue to see the hostel as a departure point in understanding the broader and wider processes and connections which become relevant for the making of the livelihoods of individuals and their social networks, understanding the hostel as just one of many nodal points of interconnections.

The formations I discuss include both formal and informal associations⁹³ and fragmentation, disintegration, separation and dissociations⁹⁴ that hostel dwellers have formed, unformed and deformed throughout the rural-urban spectrum. "My intention here [is] to explore and investigate what these pillars of their social being entailed and signified, recognising that society [and not just the household and the workplace] is about conflict and power relations

⁹² What is known as *inkolo yesintu*- African Religion

⁹³ For example, political party affiliation, *stokfel*, etc.

⁹⁴ For example, violence, criminality

rather than harmonious whole, the method of inquiry most pertinent for this chapter's purpose is one that recognises that the task at hand becomes gathering of an experimental mosaic that both defines and is defined but the *dramatis personae* of the conflicts at the hostel" (original emphasis) (Sitas, 1983: 9).

5.1 The Production of Gendered Spaces

"Social relations within hostels are characterised by tensions at every level. These tensions contain opportunities for creative transformation, as well as the danger of defensive rigidity. There is tension between the formal regulations defining hostels as a 'man's world' and the reality of the presence of women and children within the hostel environment" (Ramphele, 1993:88).

This section looks at the different relations women and men have with each other as well as relations between women and women and between men and men, the roles they play in relation to each other, and the tensions and contradictions that exist in their social relations. It shows that together with changing rural-urban connections, gender roles and relations in the hostel are changing. Historical patriarchal dominance and hierarchical structures are being challenged by the changes taking place in the hostel. In the early 1970s Wilson conducted research on migrant labour and one of his findings was that when families (women and children) moved into the family housing, closer to migrant workers' place of work, [men] complained that it became far less safe, "for example for women to walk about than it was when all men were living in one place at some distance from the township" (1972:13).

"...the particularities of relationships between men, between men and women, between women and other women, and between adults and children. These distinctions are important because of the different resources available to the various participants, and their effect on the quality of negotiated outcomes. Social relations in this context constitute the politics of space" (Ramphele, 1993:68).

It is clear that the way men and women; women and women; men and men relate to each other in the rural areas is not the same as the way they relate in urban areas. Massey (1994:2) argued that geographical variation in gender relations is a significant element in the

production and reproduction of both imaginative geographies and uneven development. It can be argued that men are drawn more to each other, women are drawn apart and women and men are in tense (contradictory) and sometimes comfortable relationships. This is caused by changes in the roles and responsibilities among both genders and identity change and consciousness (changing household headship). For example, women used to access the urban areas through men but now they are doing it themselves, sometimes with the assistance of other women (sisters, aunts and friends) (see Hunter, 2002 and 2005 and Zulu, 1993). On the same note Massey (1994) argued that there is a profundity of the connection of space and place with gender and the construction of gender relations.

In the rural areas, women normally assume a secondary position. Pule and Matlosa (2000) Pityana and Orkin, (1992) and Bozzoli, (1983) argued that authority for strategic household decisions lie with absent men while women make simple, day-to-day decisions. *Gogo Mthembu* is a good example. When I went to Nongoma I lived with her and her family. Earlier I noted that out of six biological children, she remained with two married sons. On the 24 May I found out that one of her sons who had been sick passed away. The following day I called her to ask about the funeral arrangements and she told me that she does not know when the funeral would take place because she could not make that decision without hearing from her [male] relatives. Her husband, the father of the all her children passed away in 1981; he was from Newcastle. They lived in Newcastle after getting married. He (husband) and his brothers worked in Johannesburg. When he passed away *gogo* and her six children relocated to Nongoma, which is where *gogo* was born and had grown up.

The relatives that she was referring to were close relatives of the deceased in the sense that the men from Newcastle are the brothers of *gogo's* late husband. In *isiZulu* we say *bangabakhwenyana bakagogo* (they are *Gogo's* husbands) as they are all Mthembus. So, in the deceased referred to these men as *obaba*. Although they could not make it to his wedding, he got married in their absence. Whereas, upon his death, *gogo* felt that she could not take a decision to continue with the funeral arrangement before they said anything about it.

On the other hand, they are actually distant relatives of the deceased in three ways, firstly, in the sense that they lived and worked approximately 600 km away; secondly, in the sense that they were not really close to each other. They never called or visited each other except when there was somebody getting married or if somebody died. Thirdly, these brothers never really

offered any form of support to *gogo* when her husband passed away and she had to raise her six children all by herself, especially as she had not been working. She worked as a teenager and stopped working when she got married and became a housewife. When her husband passed away, she had to go back to the labour market and look for a job and ended up resorting to informal labour, which, at the age of 79, she is still engaged in.

Two other things I would like to add to the extract above is that, when I asked *gogo* why she would wait for *obaba* from Newcastle to make a decision which primarily affects *gogo* and her immediate family she said “*phela angiyena ubaba walomuzi mina*” (after all I am not the head of this household) sounding irritated, and I knew I had to withdraw my perception. The second thing that I have noted when talking to *gogo* since I got to know her is that when she talks about the relatives from Newcastle, she makes mention of the fact that they call her *umakoti*. Although the term *umakoti* basically means the ‘wife of somebody’, it has the connotations of a newly wedded wife. The difference between these two interpretations is that the second has the idea of ‘new-ness’ which comes with a certain level of expectations and responsibilities. Perhaps the latter interpretation of *umakoti* allows us to understand why *gogo* took the decision to relay the powers of strategic decision making to the Mthembu family based in Newcastle and Johannesburg. She knows that those relatives have certain expectations of her.

In addition, when *gogo* Mthembu’s son was sick, I went to Nongoma on the 22 May 2011 to visit him at the hospital. He worked and lived in Durban and went back to Nongoma for a month when he was seriously ill before he passed away. His wife and children live at Nongoma. During my short visit, *gogo* told me that she had received a phone call from Newcastle in which the relatives reported that there was a family member who was also really sick. Although *gogo* also had a son who was sick, and had told them about it, she really felt bad that she could not go to Newcastle to see the sick relative. She moaned bitterly saying that ‘they will say *umakoti* has forsaken us’. She was planning that when her son recovered, she would take a bus to Newcastle. With regards to the funeral arrangements, the family in Newcastle eventually called and said that the funeral needs to take place not on the 28th May but on the 4th June which was the following Saturday. The family from Newcastle was expected to start arriving from Wednesday 1st June till the funeral day.

Not all the women from the rural areas accept and are comfortable with being secondary. Some actively resist. For example Mam Fikile Ngcamu is successfully fighting the idea of everything coming to a standstill until a male gives authorisation. When I visited her house in December 2010, she took me around her whole house showing me the rooms she had built for her children and the furniture she had put in. She also showed me concrete building blocks that she had bought to build more rooms. She said that she has asked her husband, who is also a migrant worker to take time to build a room she planned to use as a kitchen. She told me that her husband had not done that and more than six months had passed with the blocks being at their yard. She told me that she was giving him a couple of more months and after that she will find a constructor who would do the job for her and she would pay him. She said that if she had to wait for him with every important decision, she would not have achieved as much as she had. She had a very big house with many beautiful and newly furnished rooms. She was able to accumulate all this through her informal self-employment that she had been doing for many years now. When I visited her again in December 2011, I found that the room was almost done; she had indeed hired a contractor⁹⁵.

5.1.1 Relations between Men and Women

There is a continuous and subtle fight over space between men and women at the hostel. This fight is expressed in many ways across the various structures and spaces. One of the first and most important is the fact that the hostel is still widely known as a men's place. The perceptions of the hostel dwellers across genders attest to this. Women have had to continuously fight gender imbalances in their relations with men (see McClintock, 1995; Collins, 2009). Below are Mr Bandile Makhathi's views about gender relations. He is a man who strongly believes in tradition and has been at the hostel since the mid-1960s.

Nomkhosi: What are the three things you like about the hostel?

Makhathini: I do not want anything about this place now, I want to go home, and I have been away from home for a very long time. There are many things that I do not like here now. There is also the current way of accommodation [CRU]. We are married and have wives in the rural areas, and we live here as bachelors. I do not desire the life they live over there [CRUs].

Nomkhosi: Does this mean you prefer the blocks compared to CRU?

⁹⁵ When I visited her in December 2011, she had not seen her husband since January 2011; he had left after the December 2010 holidays and never come back. He was expected to come back on the 17 December 2011 for holidays.

Makhathini: Wait, I will get there. I like the life in the CRU as well. What I like about the block is that as I live here, that's all I do, whereas over there [CRU], there are two or three bedrooms with a kitchen and bathroom. Each person has their own bedroom. What I don't like about the life over there is that they just allocate everybody in the same unit. They do not allocate according to gender, i.e. males only, just like it was in the blocks. Let's say they allocate me in a unit with only women and I am the only male and we all share the kitchen and the toilet, that's not totally healthy.

Nomkhosi: Why?

Makhathini: You guys are female and we are male. You have been created by God to be the way you are and we have also been created by God. Perhaps you guys have partners here and I do not have a wife here.

Nomkhosi: Then you can bring her here.

Makhathini: She has a right to remain in the rural area and I have a right to live and work here [own emphasis]. I would not fetch her from home just because you guys are living comfortably with your partners. She is fulfilling her position and role as she is based in the village and I am doing the same here. But my life here won't be comfortable anymore. I would be bumping butt-by-butt with your men in the kitchen. Those are the kind of things which shorten life at the hostel. Also, when you women get used to the people that you live with, you don't fully clothe, you wrap your towels around and that's it.

Nomkhosi: Yes, when it's hot.

Makhathini: And you show your thighs as the towels flips and there are men around. There is a man in the house who does not have his wife here.

Nomkhosi: He must fetch her.

Makhathini: No, no, no! That is why I say this is not a good setting anymore.

Nomkhosi: But women used to come and stay with you in the blocks anyway. Is it not better that at least now you are separated by the bedrooms because long ago, you shared one bedroom with other men and woman or women who were visiting or even if they slept in the kitchen?

Makhathini: Yes, they were only visiting and they were not based here full time.

Nomkhosi: What if she stayed there for the whole week or more that is still a long time?

Makhathini: It is not long; it is not the same as being full time. There is a difference between being here visiting and being here full time.

Nomkhosi: So you think sharing the bathroom and the kitchen is the problem?

Makhathini: Yes it is a problem as it is.

Nomkhosi: So you think what is better is if people choose if they want to be based in 'only males' and 'only females' block?

Makhathini: Yes, that is exactly how I thought it was going to be. This is my personal view and not everybody's (Interview with Mr Bandile Makhathini, 16 January 2011).

5.1.1.1 Subtle Gender Fights in Hostel Bedrooms

As can be seen in the above extract from an interview with Mr Makhathini, one of the ways in which the fight is expressed is around the concept spaces related to the hostel block houses. As has been highlighted above, *umdiyadiya* is not accepted anymore; this means that there is no way that a woman can be living with men in a block house in the hostel, unless that block is only occupied by females. That particular couple has to resort to getting a shack if they do not yet have a room in the CRU. One can conclude that men do not want a woman in their place, which is in this case, is a bedroom. Ramphele used the “*notion of bedhold*”, arguing that the common denominator of space allocation in the hostels is a bed (1993:20) (original emphasis). She further argued that “the need to maintain the ‘brotherhood’ established over the years had led occupants of a particular hostel block to debar women from staying overnight” (p.131). Other men say if a man wants to spend time with his partner, he has to find an informal settlement.

5.1.1.2 Subtle Gender Fights over Common Areas

In addition to fighting over bedroom space, men and women also fight over the common areas related to the block houses (and informal settlements). Men, especially the ones who do not have their partners in the hostel, fight with women over the common washing sink spaces where they do laundry. Men felt that weekends should be theirs to wash and dry their clothes as they are at work during the week (see Ramphele, 1993). They argued that most of the women are unemployed and therefore have all the time to do laundry during the week. However, the reality is that women wash almost every day; if they are unemployed, doing house chores is a daily business, it is their unpaid work. They do it every day as much as men do their paid work every day. This is where they find pleasure and fulfilment and even recognition from the counterparts (men).

Women and men also fight over bathrooms. Those who live in block houses and informal settlements all have to share the same bathrooms. There are no bathrooms for only women since this was originally a men’s hostel. The abolition of influx control did not correct this arrangement. Women do not feel that their need for private bathroom space is respected. In many cases, women are pushed into bathing in their informal settlements within the available

limited space, in basins; it seems safer that way. The hostel bathrooms do not have proper locks; anybody can come in at any time. Furthermore, as with the washing sink spaces, men have imposed restrictions on when women use bathrooms. Stemming from the incorrect assumption on the part of men that women at the hostel do not work and have come to consume the money of men, they have set specific times when women can use bathrooms to bath or shower. They have put up a note which says women are not allowed to use bathrooms between 14h00-16h00. This period is for men who would be preparing to go to work on night shift. The initial assumption is that women are unemployed and the second assumption is that even if they do work they do not work night shift. In addition to the fact that women do work; they do night shifts as well. When a woman finds herself in this kind of a scenario, she either has to use her shack to bath or use the common bathrooms and risk taking a bath with a group of men at the same time.

5.1.1.3 Subtle Gender Fights in Hostel/informal Settlements

Another way in which the fight is expressed is around the concept of informal settlements. Although in chapter three I have shown that the building of the informal settlements was undertaken by men and women, women bear all the blame for the negative effects of informal settlements on the hostel. There is a general agreement between the hostel dwellers and hostel leadership that the informal settlements play a big role in the high crime levels at the hostel. Since there is an idea that the hostel has informal settlements because of women, the implication is that there is a high crime rate because of women. Women are said to have boyfriends who are involved in criminal activities and they hide them from the police at the hostel in the informal settlements. Men argue that these criminals do not have the same origins as them but are mostly from the surrounding INK area i.e. Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu Townships.

5.1.1.4 Subtle Gender Fights in CRUs

Another way in which the fight is expressed is around the concept of CRUs. In this case, because of the arrangement of sharing space with people from different backgrounds (similar to the block houses), the problems encountered are similar to that of a block house, except that the bedroom is not a common space/resource anymore. The common resources like wash

basins and bathrooms are now only shared by three people or three families, depending on the household occupying each bedroom. What becomes a subtle gender fight in the CRU is the relationship between the people who live in one unit. They have to have a plan to keep the whole unit clean, especially the shared spaces.

Nomkhosi: How is it sharing the unit with a different gender and also with different age categories?

Participant 1: There should not be any problems because when I enter my room, I enter my house/household (*angingena kwami, angingeni kwakho*).

Participant 2: Even if I can break up with one boyfriend and get another one that should not be anybody's business, if you are married, you should just focus on your partner.

Nomkhosi: Is it really that easy?

Participant 2: The point is I am going to my bed and not his bed; we only meet in the bathroom and kitchen.

Participant 3: I would say it is difficult, especially because the people I live with are older than me, if I have to bring over a boyfriend; I make sure that he only comes during the night and leave early morning because they should not see that.

Participant 4: They should also respect me because they have sex (*bayalala*) when I am in the house therefore they should understand that I also have feelings.

Participant 5: Although they do that but you cannot take away the fact that they are older than you, you must stick to your values and principles of respecting the elderly.

Participant 1: We are not a family as we live in these units, every person/room has a different surname and we even come from different places of origin and we cannot pretend that we are related (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

The above extract shows that it is really difficult to live with a different gender and generational category in one unit. People have different beliefs and expectations from one another. Two women from this FGD mentioned that they live with a man who is married and has grown up children. Some of his sons are at the hostel as well but he lives by himself in the CRU, some of his sons live in blocks and some are in different rooms in the CRU. These women's main complaint about this man, who is old enough to be their father, was that while they clean after him sometimes in the common rooms, they really get irritated when his sons come over for a meal and do not clean up after themselves. When the old man does it, they don't like it but they can live with it, but when his sons do the same thing, they really cannot take it; clearly age is an issue here.

5.1.1.5 Underlying Problems in Marital Affairs

There has been a drastic reduction in marital rates in South Africa (Hunter, 2005; 2007). This is a very important factor because in the rural-urban migration framework, getting married used to be one measure of one's success and the purpose of working. The reduction in marital rates can be associated with a number of other interrelated critical factors. (i) Unemployment or being informally employed makes it difficult to save up for *lobola* (lack of affordability) (see Hunter, 2005; 2007) (ii) Parents are not financially supportive of their sons⁹⁶ as much as they used to be. (iii) Young women have increased work prospects and are thus more independent of men (Hunter, 2007). (iv) Young women now easily submit themselves as wives even if *lobola* is unpaid. They do this by getting a child (or children), living with a man and performing duties as if one was a wife that was paid for. Young men do not see a need to spend on *lobola* when they already have live-in partners who do everything for them. (v) Some young men are not impressed by young women who have a loose value system⁹⁷.

On the other hand, women can be understood as providing more than social security for men. They take care of their partners whenever there is a need, be it a financial, social or emotional. Ill-health on the part of men was one reason for women, especially married ones to come and reside in the hostels. Women bear children for men, and men who have more control over sexual and reproductive matters. Women in the rural areas take care of the land and livestock which belongs to men. Women take care of the parents and the extended family of the husband (see Pule and Matlosa, 2000). "the vast bulk of rural labour had come to be performed by women" when men left for the cities to look for employment. Women's labour basically doubled if not trebled. Now that women have come to the cities, they once again find themselves heading households. They have had to take on wage labour as well as family headship, while not forsaking their traditional women's roles and responsibilities. It could thus be argued that women are not rejecting their commitment to family responsibilities but, rather redefining its scope, with the maternal role taking precedence over the conjugal (Walker, 1990:20). The division of labour has always been and continues to be unequal

⁹⁶ Lobolo is paid by a man to the bride's family.

⁹⁷ For men, this means that women do not behave well, and do not take good care of themselves like their parents used to. They involved themselves in multi-partnered relations; and they fall pregnant while young and unmarried with no secure income - except relying on a social grant.

between men and women of the same age but also across age groups (see Bozzoli, 1983, James, 1999).

In a study conducted by Shefer *et al.*, in the Western Cape, participants reported that traditional gender relations of male dominance and female subservience were still in evidence, along with traditional gender roles that mandated a division of labour in the household. Secondly, they reported a shift in gender roles and relations in the direction of increased power for women. Thirdly, hostile resistance by men to changes in gender power relations was observed (2008:157) (see Bozzoli, 1983 and Ramphela, 1993). Although the context specific interpretation becomes important in such cases, Shefer *et al.*, (2008)'s findings are similar to my research findings. This is illustrated by excerpts from the interviews with participants that I have inserted throughout the thesis.

One of the major challenges in the relationships between men and women and specifically in the dominance of men over women is the fact of having multiple sexual partners. This issue is becoming more prevalent and perhaps acceptable within certain social groups in this community. In a province with the highest HIV prevalence rates, this is medically and morally wrong. It directly goes against efforts to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The issue of multiple sexual partners is significant because men have long been known to be *amasoka* and *ubusoka* has always been acceptable and even celebrated in our culture (see Hunter, 2002). On the note of gender equality, the idea that there is justification for *ubusoka* in the Black African tradition/culture, should also welcome and justify a woman who has multiple sexual partners without her being called derogatory names. Bonner, writing in the context of Lesotho said that "of course what was promiscuity for Basotho men often represented independence for Basotho women. This independence seems to have been consciously asserted, and drew its strength from two principal sources. The first was Basotho women's experiences of poverty, abandonment and neglect. The second was the independent income that could be earned from brewing and prostitution" (cited in Walker, 1990:247). This is precisely the situation faced by women at the hostel. Men at the hostel believe that women who come to live at the hostel are 'loose'. They even argue that most of the women who have come to live at the hostel are the ones who have *failed* to manage the issues of their homesteads in the rural areas. They see them as 'hopeless' and 'women with no future and no past', *abasenalo imuva futhi abanalo nekusasa*.

Furthermore, Pule and Matlosa⁹⁸ (2000:2) argued that male migration increased the power of women who become de facto household heads, although authority for strategic household decisions still rests with the absent men (see Pityana and Orkin, 1992; Bozzoli, 1983). On the other hand, women in the South African context when left in the rural areas to be 'independent' as argued by Pule and Mathosa, move to the cities for different reasons. The majority of men from the hostel argued that most of the women living in the hostel are following their partners, while the women interviewed said that they have moved from the rural areas in search of employment opportunities.

An interesting contradiction from the discussion above is further expressed by the views of the migrant workers. Most of my male research participants – married and unmarried, young and old - claimed that independence is one of the three main things they like about living in a hostel.⁹⁹ While both men and women were asked the question 'what are the three things you like about living at the hostel'? Not one woman mentioned 'independence' as one of the reasons. This is the very same group of people who claimed to like the rural areas more than the urban areas and who would choose if not constrained by work related reasons, to go back to the rural areas to live with the rest of their family. The conclusion that I drew from these responses is that their 'independence' has to do with the absence of women and children, who of course would then be understood as being a burden to the daily life of a man at the hostel. Men's interpretation is that women and children's presence at the hostel is a burden to them but women and children's presence in the rural areas is their right and responsibility.

Further examination shows that most of the sexual relationships that women in the hostels are involved in are informal (for a lack of a better word). For the purposes of this thesis this means they are not married (they are unmarried, no *lobolo* has been paid, and no formal introduction with families has taken place, hence no real commitment). Women are not fully committed or their partners are not committed; they have multiple sexual partners. This means they have informal relations with the men. The children they give birth to are 'illegitimate'. This is a really big issue because the participants said that it is very important that a child be known and accepted by the family of the father. In trying to convey the extent

⁹⁸ Pule and Matlosa's two hypotheses are "male migration increases the power of women in Lesotho's rural economy, although the social system, patriarchy and ideology of domesticity restrict the boundaries of this power". Secondly, 'retrenchment of Basotho migrants leads to diminution of power of rural women and when it combines with the patriarchal social system and ideology of domesticity, the marginalisation of women is further deepened' (2000:3).

⁹⁹ This question referred to the single sex hostels as compared to the family housing (CRU).

to which the relations were informal between men and women at the hostel, both men and women said that most of the children who are born at/from the hostel are not known by both sides of the families, and this meant those children do not have a home. The argument is that the hostel is not a home but a migrant workers' place. I have to add that the informality of the sexual relationships between men and women is not only between young people as might be assumed. This concept is fully applicable to older women as well, as will be seen below in the story of Mam Pretty Zulu. Another similar story is that of Mam Nonhle Kheswa (see chapter four).

5.1.2 Relations among Women

What is also very interesting about the social relations between the two genders is that for women, most of the people that they came through (aunt, boyfriend or girlfriend) no longer live with them. When Ramphele conducted her research in the mid to late 1980s, it was important for women not to risk losing their urban accommodation base (1993). This shows that they can use relations with anybody as a stepping stone, just to get into the hostel, to get a job, to get accommodation, or to get financial support. A lot of them who came through their aunts no longer live with or depend on their aunts. A lot of them who came through their boyfriends no longer live with or depend on those boyfriends. A lot of them who came through their girlfriends quickly found another source of support.

As acknowledged by Ramphele, women do not really support each other. The interview responses revealed that they do not trust each other. Unlike men who have strong networks with each other, women do not have strong support structures among themselves. When men serve as support structures to women, men also turn out to be their enemies or their competitors (see Ramphele, 1993:134). Their presence and/or absence tend to become a point of emotional insecurity, depending on the actual circumstances of the woman. Women are generally not able to successfully pour out their sorrows to men. Because of their lack of organisation and unity in the hostel, pouring out their sorrows to other women is also not common. What Bozzoli (1991) called 'feminine solidarity' was not apparent in the hostels, CRU and informal settlements.

“The apparent inability of women to organise effectively as a group and fight for a better deal is surprising, particularly considering how much time they spend together while most men are at work. Several factors contribute to this. First, one has to recognise the reality of the dividing lines between women in this setting are age, marital status, length of stay ... and the degree of economic dependence on men. These lines of division are stronger than the ties that bind them by virtue of their common oppression” (Ramphele 1993:81).

With regards to men and women living together, I have observed that a couple would live together in a shack for a while before realising that they have irreconcilable differences and can't live with each other. In that case, depending on who owned the shack, the man would either go back to the block house or she would have to find her own place. A woman would either build or buy her own shack or find a shack to rent or get involved with a man who owns a shack. Bonner reiterated this finding by saying that women do not stick to the men through whom they get their lodgers' permits. When a woman thinks she has sufficient [resources], she drives the man away and gets another (1990:247). What normally happens is that in her own place, she can invite her sisters or girlfriends and/or children to come and live with. James reiterated that particularly for migrant working women, households have been created based on structured co-operation between sisters, between siblings of both sexes or between mother and daughter (1999:99). Zulu (1993) argued that the women are not always the wives of the men from the hostels, nor are they girlfriends of specific men living in the hostels.

Hunter also found that most women who arrived in the informal settlements stay with elder sister or other relatives or friends (2006). On the other hand, “[t]he fact that [some of] these women come from a totally distinct area of the country, and from rural backgrounds very different from those of their male counterparts illustrates a point made by Bozzoli about female migration: ‘One cannot assume that the later women who leave the land ‘belong’ to the men who left earlier” (James, 1999:44). Bozzoli, writing in 1983 from a Marxist feminist point of view acknowledged that it was grossly incorrect to make this assumption. She noted that a complex process is involved in such a move; matters of culture, ideology and family structure (see also Zulu, 1993).

What I found to be the most essential fact about the presence of women at the hostel is that they are actually working. Although there is a high unemployment rate in South Africa and consequently at the hostel, women are earning an income which promotes financial independence and stability, although their working conditions are not always good. While women were mostly involved in some form of informal activity, they did not always feel confident enough to call this employment, or self-employment. Secondly, the numbers of unemployed and the casually employed are very fluid and constantly changing. A lot of women whom I interviewed in the first round of fieldwork (2009) had a different employment status when I interviewed in the second round of fieldwork (2010-2011).¹⁰⁰

There was also an initiative, although not widespread to have relevant structures for women to complain in case of any problems. Some participants argued that these structures are dominated by men, but Mrs Ntshangase was one of the active women in these structures. Mrs Ntshangase, who was a prominent member of the IFP Women's Brigade and is now a member of the NFP has been living in the hostel since the late 1980s. She now lives in a two-bed-roomed CRU. In one bedroom another man lives by himself. He has a wife in the rural areas and she visits occasionally. In the other bedroom Mrs Ntshangase lives with her husband and her three teenage girls. The girls sleep on the kitchenette floor. Mrs Ntshangase's teenage son lives in a shack which has belonged to his mother since the late 1980s. This is what she had to say when I asked her about the living conditions of women during the apartheid era:

It was difficult at that time because as a woman, you did not have any rights in the hostel. We lived under the authority and rules of men and we did not have a say in what was happening. If there were meetings, women were not allowed to attend those meetings, because although they existed but not legally. It was important as a woman to make sure that there is no fault or mistake that you made because if something like that happened, other men were quick to tell your husband to send you home... Sometimes you would be shy to tell the people that you live in a hostel because it was known that it was a place for men. We are also grateful to a lot of work that has been done by the councillor. We are now free, we have a voice and we can talk about everything (Interview with Mrs Phindile Ntshangase, 16 July 2009)¹⁰¹.

¹⁰⁰ Between these two sets of fieldwork there was a break of nine months.

¹⁰¹ "Moreover, to my surprise, older women recalled that 'traditional' institutions like Inkatha had actually brought them some rights, albeit tied up with the preservation of hierarchies based on *inhlonipho*, or respect" (Hunter, 2010:9).

While most scholars tightly associate gender and gender issues as with women, their vulnerabilities and weaknesses, Hunter eloquently declared that gender is more than simply a one dimensional expression of male power, but is, as an historical analysis of the *isoka* masculinity demonstrates, embodied in male vulnerabilities and weaknesses (2005:401, see also McClintock, 1995). According to Hunter, gender inequalities have been accentuated by rapid in-migration despite the erosion of jobs and working conditions... Migrants still continue to tread the same paths from Northern KwaZulu-Natal that their relatives and friends have taken for the last three decades, although this time there is no work at the end of the road. Consequently, every weekday, hundreds of unemployed people move from factory to factory to *fesa* (seek work). Some have done so for more than two years without finding employment (2002:104). The mapping of women's movement in the hostels differs from those of men.

5.1.3 Relations among Men

Social relations in the hostel environment continue to be one of the strongest support structures and reference points for the migrants, especially male migrants. Men have stronger ties with each other; hence their socio-economic support system in the urban areas is stronger. They know each other. They support each other. It is true that this has a lot to do with the reproduction of the structures and the system of the hostels. Men have avenues to get together. They have long histories of those practices. They have extensive experience and strong networks. They easily carry on the traditions of their forefathers and uncles. As Ramphele acknowledged, regardless of the degrading circumstances that they live in, they have made ways of surviving (Sitas, 1996).

The situations facing men in the hostels are not the same as the situations facing women in the hostels. Men are mostly sure of secure shelter, or the next meal (social support from fathers and uncles). If and when they want to go home; even if they are not working, they can piggyback on an uncle who is going back to the village for few days. Some young men liked the fact that they can learn and get guidance from older men in the hostel; they have financial and psycho-social support. Ramphele calls this an 'economy of affection' involving kin, 'home people' and friends, which protects any from falling off the edge of society (1993:128). It appears that the rewards of accepting the system were greater for young men

than for young women (Bozzoli, 1991:81). The present system seems to work well for the men and there is no reason why they should change it (1993:69). Ramphele added that men have a vested interest in the perpetuation of a system which gives them considerable power. Ramphele (1993), Hunter (2002; 2005) and Shefer *et al.*, (2008) argued that culture is frequently used in multiple contexts to legitimise gender inequalities.

5.2 Gender Roles and Responsibilities

What became a very interesting point for me from all the interviews is that when all people were asked how they share cleaning responsibilities, none of them said they had a cleaning schedule. It seemed like a timetable was not a feasible system for them. What they sometimes mentioned is that if it is a turn of a person to clean and the person is at work, this means the house will remain dirty. Unsurprisingly there were those who complained about roommates who “did not even know how to hold a broom” basically meaning that they never clean the house. Although women also did not have rosters, their case is a bit different; it is possible to find four un-related men living together in one house whereas it was highly unlikely to find two or three unrelated women living together. Women mostly lived in one-roomed shacks compared to men who mostly lived in the block houses. Women who live in a shack probably have a male live-in partner and in that case, cleaning responsibilities lie with the woman. Changing gender and household dynamics do not imply that women’s roles and responsibilities have been reduced.

“Gender ... is not simply a question of sexuality but also of subdued labour and imperial plunder... I do not mean to imply that these domains [men and women] are reducible to or are identical with, each other; instead, they exist in intimate, reciprocal and contradictory relations” (McClintock, 1995:5).

The traditional role of a man was to be a primary home-builder; *umnumzane* (household head) and a provider maintaining the well-being of the household. His responsibilities were to find employment, pay *lobolo* and get married, establish a homestead and earn an income to take care of the whole family. The traditional role of a woman was to be a secondary home-builder, *inkosikazi* (wife), and suitable helper playing a supportive role through and through.

Her responsibilities were to become a housewife: do the house chores, and take care of the children, the in-laws, the livestock and the land, and everything and everybody at home as well as engage in secondary survival strategies for the household's wellbeing.

The paragraph above conforms to the views of most of the men who were interviewed. They believed that a woman's place is in the rural areas, taking care of the family and making sure that the household does not die out. Hunter (2005) argued that material and cultural change are inseparable and co-determining; hence both married and unmarried women have moved from rural areas to the hostels and informal settlements in great numbers (Hunter, 2007) to do that which is not 'traditional'. Traditionally, it is the role of men to support the family from all sorts of insecurities, but this study showed is the opposite. The findings presented throughout this thesis show that there are a lot of contradictions, discontinuities and tensions with regards to the traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women. Considering the changes currently taking place in gender and household matters, I argue that women have to continuously find new ways of survival in cases where men are failing to play their headship roles as dictated by tradition.

Whether at the hostel or in the rural areas, house chores remain women's primary responsibility. Women argued that this is the reason why men have extra marital relationships when they have wives are in the rural areas; they just want somebody to wash, clean and cook for them. Although one can argue that hostel dwellers are quite well-trained in performing these duties and responsibilities for themselves, the trend is that every time a woman gets in the picture, the man leaves every house chore to that woman for as long as she is there. Child rearing also remains women's responsibility, whether in the hostel or in the rural areas. The slight difference is that, women tend to leave their children of all ages with their parents (grandparents) in the rural areas and come to look for jobs in the urban areas. On the other hand, Ramphele (1993) argued that for children to be born and grow up in the hostel is good because men get to play a role that they normally never really play, as they are always in the urban areas working.

There are a number of reasons which force women to leave the rural homestead to go to the urban areas. Sometimes they go to the urban areas seeking independence and financial freedom but sometimes their struggle doubles. For example, Mrs Mam Pretty Zulu, a 51 year old woman who lost her husband a few years ago. He was the breadwinner of her household,

while she was unemployed. She came to the hostel to seek job opportunities to support her children who were all still at school then. Upon coming to the hostel through a relative, she has found herself a middle aged man as a boyfriend. This boyfriend has for some reason stopped working and now Mam Pretty has to support him as well as her children and grandchildren who are in the rural area.

On the other hand, Siboniso Mkhize is a 23 year old man who lives at the hostel, is studying part time and works as a casual (petrol attendant) in a close-by garage. After coming to the hostel and finding work, he made his mother stop working. His mother had been a housewife for many years of her life, but when she separated from the father of her children (Siboniso's father); she had to come to the hostel, through her brother to find work. She has worked for few years. Now she has two sons who are working she could go back home and continue taking care of her younger children, relying on social grants as well as support from her sons. Both sons used to live at the hostel but one has relocated for work-related reasons.

The stories above show how gender roles and responsibilities are constantly changing.

5.3 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

“Violence can thus be understood to be the perfect mediation. The colonised man liberates himself in and through violence. The praxis enlightens the militant because it shows him the means and the end” (Fanon, 1961:44).

Nomkhosi: How would you say is the level of gender-based violence at the hostel?

Participant 1: There are a lot of women who get abused here but most of them do not report it.

Nomkhosi: What are the challenges regarding the children that we live with?

Participant 2: When children are playing outside, one always has to check on them. Although CRUs are safer than the blocks and informal settlements that we lived in, if you have a girl-child, you do not have peace if you do not see her for a while because the people we live with here are the very same people that we lived with in the blocks, they have not changed in any way.

Nomkhosi: Is there any child abuse that you have witnessed?

Participant 2: Yes, there is a lot of it because one time I over-heard a conversation between two men as they were watching our children play in the parking lot, especially my child because she is bigger, they said ‘you can see those ones, they are being fed corn flakes’ and you could see that they viewed the children as potential girlfriends and not children. It is very difficult to swallow those kinds of things as women (Focus Group Discussion with women, 21 January 2011)

The government has recognised “that domestic violence is a serious social evil; that there is a high incidence of domestic violence within South African society; that victims of domestic violence are among the most vulnerable members of society; that domestic violence takes on many forms; that acts of domestic violence may be committed in a wide range of domestic relationships; and that the remedies currently available to the victims of domestic violence have proved to be ineffective”. It also acknowledges “the right to equality and to freedom and security of the person; and the international commitments and obligations of the State towards ending violence against women and children”; hence the passing of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. Section 2 of this Act refers to the duty to assist and inform a complainant of their rights. Section 3 goes on to refer to arrests that can and should be made even without an warrant of arrest; section 4 refers to an application for a protection order, and the Act sets out the formal rights and processes that needs to be followed (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998).

The important part about the Act is that it only becomes relevant once the *victim* reports the ‘case’ to the police officer. The *victim* has to travel to the police station, assuming s/he can escape the scene. Before I go further I would like to note that this Act is in most of the cases inapplicable to the everyday lives of the participants because the people who have been and are continuously involved in GBV do not reach the step of contacting the police. The policy and legislative framework is not enough to deal with gender-based violence within the rural-urban realm. The fact that we live in a patriarchal society means that any measures to address GBV should be based on such an understanding. Although people can have rights as per the Republic of South African Constitution, they still fail to perform their responsibilities of making their rights work for them.

This section seeks not only to discuss GBV; but also gender-based criminal activities. It will show that GBV is not only about women abuse or any kind of violence against women. It evokes the idea that the term ‘gender’ does not translate to ‘women’. It is an attempt to show the complicated nature of GBV and the linkages it has with gender-based criminal activities. During the period spent in the field, both in the rural areas and in the urban areas, I witnessed incidents that people would not talk about because they are not stories. Women have reached a stage where they accept these misgivings as a given (see Ramphele, 1993). The women affected by it feel that it is something that one cannot run away from; that it is something one cannot fight but something that one needs to manage and learn to live with.

Phumzile Mthethwa is in her early 20s. She came to the hostel through her aunt to further her education but now is seeking employment opportunities because she did not have adequate financial resources to further her studies. When asked how she felt women are treated at the hostel she said:

A lot of women here at the hostel are abused... as it is people say I am proud, whereas I am a very friendly person who does not hold grudges. They also say that I like men (*futhi bathi ngithanda amadoda*), not as to befriend them but that I am a bitch. In this place there are a lot of men, it is impossible to avoid them, everywhere you go you will find them, while I am sure that a place that I could find would not have so many men. If you do not smile, you are full of yourself, when you smile, you fancy men (*Uma uhlina, uyazitshela, uma uhleka uthanda abantu besilisa*). I do not feel safe or protected in this place. Every time you meet a man, he would harass you in one way or the other. Some he would touch your breast, some would touch your bums, some tell you they want to sleep with you and some would want to kiss you. What happens in this place is that, when a man is beating a woman, instead of other men trying to defend and protect the woman, they would say '*shaya*¹⁰² *isifebe*' meaning 'beat-up the bitch' (Interview with Phumzile Mthethwa, 08 May 2009).

This was confirmed by a focus group discussion that I facilitated with a group of women at the hostel (21 January 2011). The quote above illustrates the relationships that exist between men and women at the hostel. Phumzile, unlike most of the female respondents was able to openly and critically speak about men's negative treatment of women. She is a young woman who comes from the rural area where women are treated differently. She has had an opportunity to do some tertiary studies and has been exposed to a totally different environment from what she is used to in the rural areas as well as the hostel. She also had a boyfriend, who lived in a township, and she used to visit him for a weekend and again; there she saw how women were treated differently compared to the hostel. Phumzile's story shows the normal interpretation of GBV, which is violence instigated by a man against a woman.

The way people see themselves and how they think of themselves play a critical role in the interpretation of situations. I found it quite surprising that more than 90% of the sample population said that women were to be blamed or were responsible for the high death toll of men at the hostel. Participants argued that more than 80% of men that are killed at the hostel are killed because of a woman. Before the presence of women at the hostel, people used to argue that men killed each other over women because women were a scarce resource. Men

¹⁰² Ramphele wrote that "it appeared that a man is free to assault his female partner as long as he does not disturb peace" (1993:81).

arguably fought over the few women (sometimes from the townships) that they had access to. They also argued that men were always high tempered because there were no women to soften their temper. On the other hand, the respondents argued in the interviews that men now kill each other so much because of the presence of women in the hostels. They fight over women, because women tend to have more than one partner and when one finds out, he kills the other partner and then beats the woman up. This finding, although different to the one above, still conforms to the conventional interpretation of GBV, because there is a generally accepted view which says that women make men beat them up because of their wrong doing, the 'you made me do it' mentality. It shifts the blame for the wrongdoing from men to women.

One day while I was living at the hostel, I went to look for Doda Mkhalihi who I had made an appointment to have an interview with. I was with my male research assistant. We knocked at the door which he told us was where he lived and asked for Doda. The 30 year old man who responded asked us about five times who exactly we were looking for and each time gave the same answer. We both noticed the suspicious way he was questioning and looking at us, without giving any indication of knowing Doda. It was clear that he was wondering who we were, but he had not asked us who we were. He really made us both believe that he did not know who Doda was and also that we were knocking on the wrong door; the only problem was that he was not saying so. Doda soon appeared and we happily told the man that this is the person we are looking for, thank you and we left with Doda. He took us to another room next door. He explained that, that was his older overprotective brother. His older brother came to the room we conducted the interview from; I assumed to find out exactly who we were. Doda explained everything to him even before he asked. He was very apologetic when he discovered our identity and relationship with Doda. It happened that Doda worked as a security guard at University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), which is also where I was based and he explained that to his brother as well.

I learned that this big brother was like a father figure to Doda and his other three brothers who were also at the hostel. He is the oldest, they all came through him, and he takes care of everybody until they gets a job. He gave Doda funds to do the security guard course and now that he is working, he is striving to get a driver's licence for himself. The point about Doda's story is that his brother looked at us and did not trust us. First he had not seen us before and perhaps he could somehow tell that we were actually not from the hostel. Secondly, the

presence of a woman, my presence, made him more suspicious as I have explained that women are understood to be the cause of men killing each other. Unlike what one can generally assume, that he should have trusted the people he did not know because there was a woman wearing a dress in front of him, the presence of a woman raised suspicions.¹⁰³ This story moves away from the customary interpretation of GBV and/ or gender based criminal activities. It rather conforms to what and how the hostel dwellers see and interpret GBV and criminal activities at the hostel.

In addition to this story, when I was at Nongoma, I visited a local school with my key informant, where his younger siblings went. We drove to the school which was a few kilometres away from where we lived. I was driving and he was sitting in the passenger's seat. The school gate was closed, and the security guard came to us suspiciously asking who we wanted. We said we came to see the teachers of our younger sister and brother. The guard answered "*but the registration of your car is not local*"¹⁰⁴, and we had to explain that we work in Durban and he let us in. Being a little offended by the way he was looking at us and the questions he was asking, I asked him what he thought we were coming to do in that school. He said he did not trust us because women were the people being used now in criminal activities so he had to be careful letting foreign people into the school. The interpretation of the security guard was firstly that we were really foreigners and he had the evidence of a foreign car registration plate. Secondly, seeing a woman driving and a man sitting in the passenger seat must have confirmed his suspicions that there was really something wrong there, something abnormal was going on or about to happen. Again, this interpretation is reversing the traditional beliefs that men are the people who are mainly involved in criminal activities, just like the story of Doda above.

Three main things that my attention is drawn to with regards to the story of Doda's brother at the hostel and the security guard at Nongoma is that (i) It is not only at the hostel that women are not trusted but in the rural areas as well. (ii) It is men who are suspicious of women (iii) It is actually me that they were suspicious of. These are not stories that I was told about but I

¹⁰³ I guess to him I could have been Doda's girlfriend who had another partner (my male research assistant). For all he knew I could be there with my partner to show my partner Doda, the guy whom I would have been supposedly cheating with. This kind of a story that I am making up now is not uncommon at the hostel.

¹⁰⁴ The car we drove had NJ from Inanda instead of NND from Nongoma.

experienced them in the process of conducting my fieldwork.¹⁰⁵ GBV and gender-based criminal activities remain endemic in South Africa, regardless of the changes that have taken place in the post-apartheid era (Shefer *et al.*, 2008).

5.4 Cultural Formations, Identity and Belonging

Cultural formation¹⁰⁶ is a form of identity and it gives a sense of belonging.

“To admit that one does not have a mudzi [homestead] is to reveal a grave social predicament. Social as much as spatial demarcation is at issue; the above question inquires into the stranger's sense of belonging. The city is rarely thought to provide an adequate place for belonging, and even those who have lived most of their lives as labour migrants, or who were born abroad as the children of labour migrants, usually have no difficulty in stating their village and district of origin in Malawi” (Englund, 2002:137).

While Elder (2003a:152) has argued that “the linkages between areas of origin and the hostel are also at the core of the struggle for identity that hostel dwellers have experienced since the collapse of apartheid” I add that it is not ‘since apartheid’ but that this has always been the case. The quote above, although it is in the context of Malawi migrants, fits perfectly with South African rural-urban migrants. As Bozzoli (1991:7) observed “[i]n the case of interviews such as these, which take the form of dynamic conversation, expression of consciousness and social identity are evident”. Segal argued that “their rural consciousness is deeply internalised, and their responses to happenings in the city are strongly determined by an ingrained set of values and expectations” (1991:11, see Delius, 1990; Zulu, 1993). While I was conducting the interviews, I met a lot of men who upon greeting me would ask a very

¹⁰⁵ This quite clearly shows that the perceptions that both men and women have about women’s capability of wrongdoing are sometimes exaggerated. If I, on two occasions or more was suspected to be a criminal while I was not, this means that the people’s perceptions can indeed be wrong about the level or role of women in gender based criminal activities.

¹⁰⁶ “[T]he emphasis on cultural formations originated in South Africa in the writings of ‘black consciousness’ intellectuals... the term ‘culture’ became synonym of the totality of black experience. In the process everything that one cared to mention was reduced to an aspect of ‘culture’: whenever economic relationships, processes of political struggle, artistic forms of expression and modes of behaviour or working class norms were referred to, culture became their definite source. This led to an ambiguous usage of the term that did not assist any sociological investigation of its subject-matter”, (Sitas, 1983: 37).

interesting question which is *kukephi ekhaya?* (where is your home?¹⁰⁷), actually meaning where is your homestead, *lapha kwasala khona inkaba yakho* (where you umbilical cord remains)? Of course they included the latter part of the question either if they saw that I look confused or if I provided a ‘wrong answer’ like ‘I am from Inanda Township’. This is the same question “where is your homestead?” that Englund refers to in the above quote. It is clear that sometimes it is not even about an individual who might be born in an urban area but it about is the roots of the family, that matter the most. Again it is in this sense that I argue that the concept of family among the African people is still very strong. It does not matter how long they have lived in the urban areas, they insist on being buried in the rural areas when they die (see Andersson, 2001). The beginning and the end of one’s life is seen as the most significant with regards to one’s identity and belonging and it is this identity and belonging that links the urban with the rural and vice versa.

Asked which area they liked the most between urban area and rural areas, participants said it is the rural areas. ‘*That’s where I was born*’; ‘*that’s where my family is at*’; ‘*life is not as expensive as in the urban areas*’ were some of the reasons given. When asked if they support a household in the rural areas they all said yes but this differed in terms of one’s employment status. Those who were employed were able to send money home consistently in terms of time intervals and amount. Those who were permanently employed only sent money home once a month. The amount depended on how much the migrant gets paid. In terms of goods (groceries and things like furniture) most migrants said that they do not send these items home because transport is expensive. But Christmas is exceptional as sometimes some migrants buy clothes for spouses and children.

A number of studies have shown that migrant workers do not only support a home in the rural areas; their lives are deeply implicated and felt in the lives of their family members who live in the rural area (Elder, 2003a; 2003b; see Posel, 2003; Mamdani, 1996; James, 1991; Segal, 1991; Bozzoli, 1991; Delius, 1990; Smit, 1998; Murray, 1981). They go home approximately once a month or once in two months depending on financial circumstances as well as social responsibilities in the urban areas and rural areas. Married persons tend to

¹⁰⁷ ‘Home’ does not merely signify a geographical area in the country whose inhabitants, when in town could share resources and provide material and social benefits for each other. It also embodied a wealth of local knowledge about the pre-colonial past, about the significance of that past for present-day migrant experience (James, 1991:22).

maintain a stronger social link with their rural homestead due to family commitments (Ngcongco *et al*, 2006:233).

According to the migrants, the role of ancestors has everything to do with one's identity. Migrants believe that "If I am to change my life, even the ancestors will not support me. They know that they left us so that we can take care of our homes and if we do not do that, then we would be doing something very wrong" (Interview with Buthelezi 08 May 2009).

A young unemployed female migrant said that "the hostel [urban areas] is not a place where one can shisa impepho (burn incense), there are no ancestors who can accept that. Everybody has to go back home in order to do that" (Interview with Mbali Zikode, 16 July 2009).

Another migrant said "the relationship between rural and urban areas is the culture of the people. Zulu people who live here and those who live in the village all use the same culture" (Interview with Muziwemali Shagase, 19 July 2009).

In contrast to Mosoetsa's interpretation of her findings; where she argued that the rural is a place to hide the sickly, for most migrants [at the hostel], the village is not the distant site of 'retirement' - it is an ever-present aspect of their lives (Englund, 2002:153). Posel argued that as rural-urban migration became more extensive in South Africa, many communities sought to develop 'internal moral sanctions', making migrants feel morally bound to their groups of origin, and to increase the incentives for migrants to remit income (2003:4).

We must understand that when we talk about identity and belonging with reference to migrants, we not only refer to their rural sources of identity, but both rural and urban identities are being continuously merged. There is an active reconstruction of a cohesive identity in the urban context (see James, 1991). Rural-urban divisions were always actively resisted (Sitas, 1983; Mamdani, 1996). Although colonialism came about at a time when there were ethnic divisions, Mamdani argued that these tribal cultures were highly textured and elastic (1996: 292). "Firstly, one finds the legacy of enforced 'tribalism' or ethnic divisions' in the compound system. Traditionally, and no less currently, African mineworkers were divided along ethnic lines; they furthermore, were encouraged to be divided as a facet of the mine owner's policy. Encouragement consisted in the fostering of the inter-ethnic forms of competition at work and during leisure time, (through 'mine dancing', sport, etc.). Again,

this cultivation of ethnicity was by no means a one-way process. Rather, a dialectical process, a contradictory process, where, in and through this ethnic forum a remarkable assertion of autonomy and indeed self-expression by African migrant workers was achieved, through regionally based brotherhoods” (Sitas, 1983:247) (original emphasis).

Social life at the hostel tends to be organised around regional or ethnocentric arrangements in spite of the existence of cross-cutting activities like work and religion. For example, musical groups often comprise men from the same geographical districts, and soccer clubs may follow the same pattern. This is because of the mutual trust inherent in close contact neighbourhood relationships (Zulu, 1993:4) According to Mr Zondi (leader of *indlamu* dance group - he is also a block chairman), *indlamu* (Zulu traditional dance) is a way of *ukwakha* (building) people; it also facilitates *inhlonipho* (respect). It gives you an identity, *igama lobunsiswa* (youthful nickname), i.e. he is called *umasiniya* (*umasenior*) (of the seniors); he got the name because he used to like dating older women than himself. “*Indlamu* is like a hobby, it about the past as well as the present. It disciplines you; it prevents you from being involved in all dangerous and unnecessary commitments. We practice after work and compete during the weekends” (Interview with Mr Vusokwakhe Zondi, 12 November 2010).

Fanon also writes about the importance of language as a powerful tool in cultural formations. While he recognises what he called ‘cultural imposition’, for him, that also was secondary to psychological response¹⁰⁸. He notes that every man who has spent some time in the city will strive to be seen and heard, to be different from the local people. My application and embracing of his arguments considers and emphasises the differences of gender and generational. Fanon tended not to focus on the different resistance mechanisms of different people in these situations individually and collectively. His analysis missed an important cultural approach which should not be avoided especially in dealing with Black African people. For example, in the case of South Africa, Sitas (1996) Oliphant *et al* (2004) and James (1999) acknowledge the resistance mechanisms used through cultural formations.

“Despite the abject conditions faced by many migrants living in urban hostels ... their artistic production has been characterised by a vibrant and challenging creativity.

¹⁰⁸ By seeing the need for equitable distribution as part of a humanistic project, Fanon transforms its economic terms of reference; he places the problem of development in the context of those forceful and fragile “psycho-affective” motivations and mutilations that drive our collective instinct for survival, nurture our ethical affiliations and ambivalences, and nourish our political desire for freedom. Bhabha, 2004:xviii- in *The Wretched of the Earth* Preface)

Thus although the migrant labour system has undoubtedly has a devastating impact on the lives countless South Africans, migrants have nevertheless managed to find ways of shaping and making sense of their experiences through music, dance, dress, and other household and personal items'... A lot of what the migrants have produced 'tend to affirm a sense of continuity between the past and the present, the rural and the urban, the homesteads where these migrants grew up and the [hostels] where these migrants were, and still are, confined during their long absences from home" (Oliphant, *et al*, 2004:67, see James, 1999).

Indeed social dynamic investigation has become very important with regards to spatial concepts, as argued by Smith and Katz (1993). Hostels have always been about the articulation, negotiation and re-definition of the complex realities and identities that continue to be developed, shaping and in turn being shaped by the lives of the hostel dwellers. Although some people tend to live for very long periods which can be up to 30 years in the hostels, they never really feel like they belong there. The areas that they come from are where they are always tied to and have a sense of belonging to. bell hooks, in her book titled *Belonging, a culture of place*, talks about the importance of people having a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging for her, after travelling the United States for a number of years, eventually brings her back to her home, Kentucky, where she was born and raised. She comes back to her family and to her community. She acknowledges the importance of "the past as a resource that can serve as a foundation for us to revision and renew our commitment to the present, to make a world where all people can live fully and well, where everyone can belong;" (hooks, 2009:5). She defined a culture of belonging as having an "intimate connection with the land to which one belongs, empathic relationship to animals, self-restraint, custodian conservation, deliberateness, balance, expressiveness, generosity, egalitarianism, mutuality, affinity for alternative modes of knowing, playfulness, inclusiveness, non-violent conflict resolution, and openness to spirit" (hooks, 2009:13).

For most of the people who live in the hostel, it is always in their conscious mind that they do not belong there. There is a phrase which was often said by a group of young women in the hostel, it says "*phela sisekuhambeni*" which means, "after all we are in a journey or we are foreigners". They said this in relation to unfriendly situations that they encountered while at the hostel. For example, with regards to poverty, not having anything to eat, their response to that situation would be "*phela sisekuhambeni*" hence we can't expect everything to be like

home. This is basically their way of consoling themselves and trying to be positive about the future. This future, like bell hooks, which might well lead them to go back home, because at home, at least they have a sense of belonging. No matter what happens, 'belonging' serves as a point of security for them. On the other hand, for men the situations can be interpreted slightly differently from women. Men, with the assistance of the social system and structure have created 'a home away from home' for themselves through strong social networks and a support system. It is in that sense that I argue that they do not always feel a "sense of crisis and of impending doom" (hooks, 2009).

Throughout their history; hostels, according to Sitas, "have been unremitting sources of grievance and anger" (1996:236). In the post-apartheid era and with the introduction of the CRU, I argue that their anger and grievances have been redefined and/or redirected. This is directed against the government for introducing the CRU against their will, for not providing a better life for all as promised, for not only giving them low paid jobs but for the high unemployment rate as well as continuing overcrowding in the hostels, and for failing to control the crime rate in the hostels. It is also directed against women for not being obedient and submissive enough, and for wanting to compete with men in the hostels while 'abandoning' the rural homesteads. Living in the hostel or informal settlements has never been out of choice for most of the rural migrants; rather it is seen as an only option. One is continuously called *impohlwa*, meaning a bachelor even if he is married and has children. Studies (see Ramphela, 1993, von Holdt, 2003) have found that workplaces often differentiated work according to whether one was a migrant or not. Migrant workers used to be given the toughest and dirtiest, lowest paid jobs compared to the township residents (von Holdt, 2003).

Regardless of their strengths through social relations, I want to argue that hostel dwellers are continuously being socially polarised from the broader society in which they exist.¹⁰⁹ This argument takes into consideration the general low educational levels of migrants located in hostels and informal settlements, the unskilled and semi-skilled nature of their labour resulting in low income levels, and the complicated gender dynamics which are at play in these residential units. Education, skills and gender are all largely intertwined and are

¹⁰⁹ "[T]he uniqueness of cultural formations in the hostels has to be understood within a profound degree of alienation arising from their concrete experiences as industrial workers. This alienation has to be situated on the basis of three pillars of domination: historical, spatial and structural pillars" (Sitas, 1983:276)

influenced by the previously disadvantaged identities¹¹⁰ of the hostel dwellers. I also want to argue that the changing of hostels into family housing perhaps did not consider the changes in the demographics of the hostel population as well as the changes in the rural-urban flows.¹¹¹

5.5 Spirituality and Religion

So what I mean is that there is a tendency for men to look down upon women and take them as subjects. There are many chances that you experience those kinds of things at the hostel because most of the things that oppress women are religious and traditional, and most of the people who live at the hostel are traditionalists. A woman to those people is junior, a subject and does not have a voice (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

It should be clear from the outset; however, that religion and tradition do not always serve as a point of oppression but as a point to draw strength from, a positive point of love and belonging, unlike what the quote above suggests.

5.5.1 Nazareth Baptist Church (NBC) (Shembe)

This area has a particular and very specific history with the NBC. An example of a household where they belong to NBC is Mr Zondi's household. He personally does not belong to any church but his wives who are based in the rural areas go to the NBC church. He said he also feels like he is a member because he does not drink alcohol nor smoke cigarette, which he believes are some of the requirements of the church. As a result of the influence of his wives, he conforms to their practices when in the rural areas i.e. they are not allowed to use fire during the Sabbath¹¹².

The story above shows interesting gender relations between the husbands and wives under the church umbrella. It also shows a continuation of the faith-religion in the rural-urban continuum. The NBC is a highly patriarchal church and has its head-quarters in Inanda which

¹¹⁰ Being a Black woman or man in South Africa and living in the homelands of South Africa meant being deprived proper education and access to relevant training institutions. Women always suffered way more than men.

¹¹¹ Hunter draws on the importance of the interconnections between the unemployment, low marital rates; the collapse of agrarian livelihoods and the consequences this has for the formation of household and sexuality (2002, 2005, 2006 & 2010).

¹¹² Starts on Friday at sunset and ends on Saturday at sunset.

is approximately five kilometres from KwaMashu hostel. I found that upon retirement, coming to Inanda through the hostel was one of the men's main reasons for returning to the hostel. The church's main services go on for days, so men spend some of the days at the hostel, i.e. Mr Gumede. Men have a more active membership than women. This can be associated with the high powers that they get from and through the church compared to women who are always given an inferior and secondary position.

5.5.2 Christian Churches

Shefer *et al.*, found that churches were seen as supportive of the traditional gender roles and 'traditional culture', i.e. women were expected to get permission from their husbands for their actions and men were supposed to be obeyed (2008). James found that the rejection of church membership by both widows and those who are single who she spoke to suggested that the independent churches, characterised as an important source of identity for migrants, were more effective for male migrant workers than for women (1999:51). However in this study I found that church membership in the urban areas was generally 'rejected' by both men and women. Women, on the other hand, said they were members of churches in their areas of origin whereas men did not subscribe to any church (except NBC).

Similar to James's findings (1999) I found that Zion Christian Church (ZCC) was one of the most popular churches. James found that ZCC appealed more to migrant men (and to the women attached to them) than to unattached migrant women. She interpreted this trend as a way for women to move away from dependence on men, especially because they were actively engaged in dance groups (165). Another reason offered by James for women's lack of interest in church is that they did not have enough time to attend church because they had to work productively as well as (reproductively), they had to attend their dance sessions, and they had to take time to visit home as well as attend burial societies that they were part of (*ibid*).

On the other hand, Bozzoli found that *manyanos* (separate women's Christian organisations) could be interpreted as an organised form of 'domestic struggle'. This is a site of struggle which was used "to express their grievances in however confused a fashion, and as a way of redressing them" (Kros in Bozzoli, 1983:165). Gaitskell argued that women came together in

these unions explicitly as *mothers*. She went on to argue that these organisations could be seen as a response to gender segregation on the part of mostly uneducated African Christian women. The domestic and spiritual aspects of *manyanos* reinforce each other as they offered priority and support to motherhood in the name of economic and social upheaval (1990) (original emphasis). Furthermore, Bozzoli argued that women also demonstrated a “standing back” a distancing from religion, a capacity to regard it as resource to be taken or left, depending upon its usefulness. From the responses of the rural-urban women I spoke with, I have found that this is still relevant. Ramphele argued that the hostel dwellers’ experience with the established churches is a reflection of a crisis which can be associated with the churches’ patriarchal and hierarchical traditions (1993:66; see also James, 1999:164)¹¹³.

5.6 Political Formations

This section intends to show that spatial and gender issues are not secondary to politics but these are interwoven and occur simultaneously both as a result of and also resulting in the hostel’s perplexity. On the other hand, time and space work in and through each other in the production of space as well as meanings. Broadly, Bonnin’s investigation of political violence in Mpumalanga Township helps us to understand how space, place and identity play themselves out in the normalised lives of the township dwellers. She looked at the unique spatial form that the violence took with gendered and generational dimensions. The similarity between Bonnin and Mosoetsa in addition to their specific research sites is their specific interest in issues of gender, and generational forms of association within and beyond the household and the role of the textile industry in KwaZulu-Natal.

5.6.1 Brief Historical Overview

In this section I would like to start by challenging Zulu (1993) on his ideas about the IFP and the KwaMashu hostel. Zulu (1993) argued that the emergence of the UDF and Cosatu as powerful political forces drove Inkatha out of townships into the hostels which, because of their marginalised position, became a natural base for a conservatively placed organisation (p.1). Secondly, he argued that both KwaMashu and uMlazi hostels were politically neutral

¹¹³ “This fading of the attraction of church for *kiba* singers, as indicated earlier, raises some questions about the effectiveness of churches-particularly independent ones as sources of migrant identity and as expressions of peasant/proletarian consciousness” (James, 1999:164).

territories until the first quarter of 1990 (p.2). These statements are highly problematic for an area which accommodates people from the Northern KZN rural areas which were the home of Inkatha (i.e. Ulundi). The political violence that erupted in the early 1990s should not be understood as the beginning phase of IFP infiltration into KwaMashu and uMlazi hostels. The history of the IFP at KwaMashu and uMlazi could by no chance have been built over three months, 'the first quarter of 1990'. Politically, the IFP is known to have dominated the KwaMashu hostel almost since its establishment; the views of the ANC Councillor, who was also an activist during the apartheid period, have also attested to this fact. Some hostel dwellers who do not support the IFP argued that one has to have an IFP membership card if one wants proper services from the hostel leadership.

5.6.2 Change in Political Leadership: From IFP to NFP and ANC

Regarding the change in the leadership of the ruling party (from Mbeki to Zuma), there are a lot of people at the hostel who come from Nkandla, where President Jacob Zuma was born. During the interviews they admitted supporting him but keeping it a secret as they know that the hostel leadership would find reasons to chase them out of the hostel; they have seen that happen before. The change in ANC leadership saw a change in the voting patterns at the IFP-dominated KwaMashu hostel as well. The ANC was for the first time able to get a slice of the pie at the hostel. One section of the hostel came under the jurisdiction of an ANC councillor after the 2009 national elections.

The ANC councillor argued that the relationship of the (IFP and ANC) councillors is cordial:

“We understand each other cordially more than the ordinary members of our organisations. I do call him whenever there is any issue that I would like to discuss with him and he is also able to do the same. There is a reasonable relationship between us because we sit in the same chambers and we understand the issues in the same way... but because of the nature of the hostel, it is not easy for me to work there, I am unable to work in my jurisdiction area because of political intolerance. This results in him [IFP councillor] having to work in my area as well because he has his people there who listen to him. With regards to person to person interaction, it is okay, but with regards to the constituency at large, it is a challenge for me” (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

When I asked the IFP councillor about the relations between the two councillors he said:

“actually there is no relationship between us, I never have a reason to call him, and I get to see him when we are attending the same meetings. The ANC councillor does not come to the hostel, he probably does not like the hostel dwellers and that is why he does not come to them and the hostel dwellers do not go to him as well because they do not like him. I, with the limited resources that I have provide services to all the hostel dwellers, including the ones in his jurisdiction” (IFP Cllr, 13 July 2010).

I further interrogated the ANC councillor about his relationship with the hostel:

Nomkhosi: Do you ever go to the hostel?

ANC Cllr.: No, I never go there, if I have to go there, there needs to be police to escort me. Recently we went there to have Imbizo¹¹⁴ with the Mayor and there were a lot of police. When I started talking in that Imbizo, some people booed me and those were the leaders of IFP and they were trying to score some points to their members by doing that. Since I have been a councillor, I have only been to the hostel two times and both those times I was escorted by the police. The first time we went to campaign and we gave out ANC T-shirts and violence erupted and we had to be rushed out and some people got hurt. So I really cannot work at the hostel. It would not be a problem for me to call a meeting at the hostel, but where would I think the people who would attend that meeting would sleep in the night. So, in order to people, [ANC members] to be safe while living at the hostel, they should not be seen to be supporting ANC (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

5.6.2.1 From IFP and ANC to IFP, ANC and NFP

Amandla!

Awethu! X2

Ubani umholi?

uNjinji! X2

Sihole!

Njinji x2

Amandla means ‘power’. *Awethu* means ‘is ours’. *Ubani umholi* means ‘who is the leader’. *Njinji* is a clan name for the surname - Magwaza. *Sihole* means ‘lead us’. This is the way that every community meeting at the hostel has started since 31st January 2011, which is the day that the National Freedom Party (NFP) was officially announced as a newly formed political party in the media. Before the existence of the NFP, the same slogan was shouted but with a

¹¹⁴ Government’s community function where government officials respond to questions and comments of the community members

different answer when it came to asking who the leader is. The answer then was ‘uShenge’, which is a clan name for the surname – Buthelezi, IFP leader.

However, the answer is not the only thing that is different when the slogan is shouted; the action is different as well. While the leader and the respondents would raise only their right-hand side arm with a clenched fist in shouting this slogan, with the newly formed party, people were urged to raise both their clenched fists in a manner going forward rather than up. I was fortunate to still be in the field while all these things were happening and I got a chance to attend the first few meetings where the masses were literally being trained by the former IFP and now NFP leaders in what to say and what to do. This happened a week after Mrs Zanele Magwaza-Msibi lost her case against the IFP in court. The same night of the case, a meeting took place in the community hall of the hostel which stands right across from the offices where the ward councillor and the superintendent are based. This meeting continued till the early hours of the morning; there was a long convoy of cars parked on the pavement of the main road of the hostel. There were a couple of South African Police Service cars as well¹¹⁵ (*The Witness* Newspaper, 09 December 2010). The next day I heard from the people who were part of that meeting that the name and the logo of the new party had been agreed upon and they waited for the official announcement which happened the following Tuesday¹¹⁶. The ANC was now not the major target of IFP; the NFP was. This controversy was made even more difficult because the IFP councillor, his wife and executive at the hostel were among the first people to convert to the NFP and they basically told everybody to do the same.

¹¹⁵ I could see this because my room was also not far from the councillor’s offices.

¹¹⁶ In actual fact, what had happened on the day of the court case is that I had set a focus group meeting with a certain category of hostel dwellers, who so happened to be employed by the Zenzile Cleaning Company. This company is owned by Mrs Bongi Gwala, who also happens to be the wife of the ward 39 councilor. At the set time of the focus group discussion, which was in the late afternoon, the participants said they could not make it to the discussion because they had been called by their employer to come and clean the community hall in preparation for a special meeting that was going to take place that evening after the result of the court in Pietermaritzburg (PMB). One of the participants said, “now that this thing of Zanele has started; I do not think that we will ever have time for that discussion”. By “this thing” she meant the series of meetings related to the formation of a new political party. Indeed, since that day, it was difficult to set an appointment with some of the hostel leaders who are also said to be holding high positions in the NFP.

5.6.2.2 Community Meetings

What became a problem after the establishment of NFP and the leadership of the IFP crossing over to the NFP is that they always called meetings that they said were community meetings but with a strictly NFP political agenda. They used this platform to blatantly discourage people from continuing with their IFP membership. The NFP leadership went to the extent of swearing that it is over with the IFP and that anybody who still follows it is wasting his or her time. For example, there was a loud hailer at the beginning of the second week of February announcing that the ward councillor was calling a community meeting on the 10th at 4.30pm at a local sports ground. At that time there was just a small crowd of people that kept increasing. At 5.30pm the numbers had gone up but the meeting had not started. At 6.30pm the councillor had not come but other leaders were already there and few minutes after that they decided to start the agenda. Ten minutes after the start of the meeting then they told the community that the councillor was not going to make it to a meeting which was called by him. Out of the five speakers in that meeting, not one apologised for starting late. Secondly, not one of them presented the items that were on the councillor's agenda or at least the community was not directly informed of that. The speakers were as follows: youth brigade chairperson from ward 39, youth brigade chairperson from ward 40, (both young men) member of the women's brigade (middle aged woman); member of the ward 40 branch committee who is also nominated to stand for ward 40 councillorship in the upcoming local election (middle aged man); chairperson of the ward 39 branch committee and a member of *Ubunye bamaHostela*¹¹⁷ Organisation. What is important about these members/leaders is that they are normally part of more than one committee at the hostel, which means that the many different kinds of committee that exist in the hostel have the same people composing the membership.

All these people all spoke about the same things, changing membership from the IFP to the NFP, attendance at the launch of the NFP on the 12 February 2011, and registering to vote. They also mentioned that they had heard that there were people who called themselves leaders who had called an IFP meeting on Saturday, which was the very same day of the launch that people were encouraged to attend; people were then discouraged from attending 'unofficial meetings' which are called by unofficial leaders of a political party that is almost non-existent.

¹¹⁷ This can be translated as 'The Unity of the Hostels'.

On the morning of the 12th February 2011 at 5am there was a loud hailer which went on till 09.30am, telling people to wake up and get ready to attend the launch of the NFP. A few minutes after that there was a large crowd of people toyi-toying and singing, a few wearing orange NFP t-shirts with a picture of their leader (Mrs Zanele Magwaza-Msibi). After two hours, there was another crowd, approximately 25% of the NFP crowd. The second one was wearing white IFP t-shirts with a picture of their leader (Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi). The first crowd was going to a train station to go to the launch in town. The second crowd was on its way to the local sports ground, the same one used for the Thursday meeting. In the second crowd a few people were singing as well and one woman was screaming “don’t be afraid of your block chairmen!” and “*phansi ngo Zanele Magwaza phansi!*” (down with Zanele Magwaza down!)

The first big crowd had only a few people wearing NFP t-shirts and this is because this t-shirts are sold to the members at R30.00 each. The leaders said they are being bought at R25.00 each and the extra R5.00 goes to fund the party since it is new and does not have funds. However, people were promised that if they came early to the launch of the party, they would be able to get free NFP t-shirts. In the IFP crowd which was smaller, everybody was wearing an IFP t-shirt. At another youth meeting which was called by the councillor on the 5th February 2011, while that meeting was going on, there was a car with a loud hailer saying that IFP t-shirts are available to anybody who wants them. Later that day I discovered that IFP president Mangosuthu Buthelezi came to the hostel and went to some of the zones, “without bodyguards he walked around and people were happy to see him and lots of children were taking pictures with him. Later that night there was a rumour going around that the parents of the children who were noted taking pictures with IFP president were in trouble” said a woman who lives in the zone which was visited by the IFP President. Again SAPS was around for most of the day.

5.6.2.3 Contradictions within NFP leadership

While one leader said that now there is no need to put on an IFP t-shirt because “we” are not IFP members anymore but NFP members, another leader said that in South Africa everybody has a right to wear whatever they would like to wear because it is a free country. On the

same issue, following the day of the court case, active NFP members went around telling people to burn every single item of IFP clothing that they had. Some were saying that this should not be the case because it would cause fights between IFP and NFP supporters.

On a traditional/cultural note, while one leader said that now there is no need to carry traditional weapons whenever people are gathered, the other leader in another meeting said that it is okay for people to carry their traditional weapons because they do not know what could happen where they are going.

On the issue of inter-generational conditions, in one community meeting, a NFP youth leader said “there is no need to call older people as *obaba*, we are all comrades now”, an older ‘comrade’, *ubaba* who is also in a leadership position stood up and said “there is no way we can disregard our positions as *obaba*, while I hear what the young leader is saying but we are still *obaba*.” One thing that they all seemed to agree on is the fact that people will not be forced, as used to be the case in the IFP to leave their rooms to attend IFP meetings and rallies. However, hostel dwellers were still generally scared of NFP leaders and their leadership style because they knew that it was exactly the same people that led the IFP and used harsh measures to get people to join and follow the IFP.

5.6.2.4 Triple Membership vs. Dual Membership

While dual membership mainly related to people who lived at the hostel and silently supported the ANC but were ‘forced’ to have an IFP membership card as well, now people who are and have always been IFP supporters are confessing to be ‘forced’ into taking dual membership, that of the IFP because they like it and believe in it, as well as that of the NFP because this was temporarily the ruling party at the hostel. The reason why hostel dwellers saw the need to have either double or triple membership was because they knew the reality of living at the hostel. In order for you to get service from the leadership; you have to have an IFP membership card. The hostel management and leadership always say that this is not true as they serve everybody who knocks on their doors with whatever need.

One woman told a story that proved that, indeed, one did have to have a membership card in order to qualify for services. Her husband had gone to a block chairman to request

accommodation in the CRU. She did not get a room because at the time when people were being registered from shacks and blocks to qualify for rooms in the CRU, she was in the rural area. However, since she had come to the hostel through her husband and her husband had come to the hostel through his father, she had to bring that fact up. It was useful because the block chairman knew the husband as well as his father, but the problem started when the block chairman asked the husband if he attended annual general meetings of the IFP. This was before the formation of the NFP. He said no, and I asked why did he not lie and say yes. She said it is because the chairman would then ask to see the card that IFP members get during the attendance of that meeting. This proves the importance of having an IFP membership card as well as attending the relevant meetings of the party, even if you do not vote for it.

5.6.2.5 Local Elections 2011

It was announced on the news on the 22 February 2011 that Dr Zweli Mkhize the KZN premier would mandate Community and Liaison Officer Mchunu to lead a team which would facilitate peace monitoring before, during and after the local elections. As has been highlighted in the previous chapters, KwaZulu-Natal was one of the provinces which were engulfed by political violence that lasted for more than a decade. The IFP was also always known to be part and parcel of the political violence that was taking place in almost every part of KZN.

On the other hand, the NFP seemed to be imposing its hegemony among a large numbers of hostel dwellers, most of whom supported the IFP and some of whom belong to other political formations like ANC. What is crystal clear from these occurrences is that while the NFP members have left the IFP because they say there is no democracy in the IFP. NFP leadership and members at the hostel have been seen to be doing the same thing by assuming that their decision to change political parties means that others must follow suit. Every time you would hear leaders in the community meetings talking about “we as NFP...” you would hear people on the background asking “who said we are NFP?” One wonders about the right of the people to choose. It is also clear that people do not attend NFP/community meetings because they support the NFP, but because they are scared to be seen as unsupportive of the party because

that is where the authority of the hostel is. Therefore it can be concluded that a lot of people are not happy with the way the politics are being handled in this place.

After not seeing ANC placards posted on the power poles for a long time, on the 26 April 2011, I saw ANC members putting up the ANC boards in the hostel while being escorted by the SAPS. While I somehow expected that the next day those ANC boards would have been taken down and destroyed by IFP/NFP members, they were not. On the day of the elections they were still up.

We spent a lot of money and a lot of time printing and putting those campaign boards. It took us two days to put them up around the whole hostel and on the evening of the second day, they started taking them down and tearing them (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2011).

The ANC councillor was referring to what had happened in the 2009 elections. I can conclude that levels of political intolerance at the KwaMashu hostel are coming down.

5.6.2.6 Political Views from Nongoma

Mr Siyabonga Maseko, who is now an ANC organiser at branch level at Nongoma is a retired man who has spent about 30 years in the city labouring for his family and has now come back to reside with his family. Unfortunately the majority of his family has also relocated to the city to seek greener pastures, whether through employment opportunities or furthering education. He now lives with his wife and grandchildren, both from his late children as well from children who are based in the city.

He told me that he felt the ANC did not work hard enough during the pre-election periods. He noted that there were a lot of opportunities for the ANC to canvass but they just lie back, allowing the new NFP to take over from the IFP. The part of Nongoma where I did research was under the leadership of the IFP and the NFP took over in the 2011 elections. Maseko mentioned that the existence of another political party other than the then ruling IFP and rivalry with the NFP was good because the IFP took their eyes off ANC and focused on fighting the NFP. This proved to be very difficult because of the fact that the NFP broke away from the IFP. He also felt that there was more political tolerance because before the existence of the NFP, people could not put on their ANC t-shirts without being attacked, but after the coming in of NFP, things relaxed and people were not attacked.

In all that has been said about the political life of the hostel dwellers, it is important to make clear that as correctly argued by the ANC councillor, “it is not that all the hostel dwellers hostile to the development process and to other political formations, it is only a fraction of them, and that fraction is generally more powerful, hands-on and autocratic. This makes the political hostel life generally difficult”. Furthermore, “the issue of the hostel is not an issue that can be addressed by the branch level of the political organisation, it should be taken care of by higher structures, which is the provincial office of the organisation” (ANC Cllr, 26 November 2010).

5.7 Household and Housing

A household is defined as “all those persons who share a living unit, among whom there is a degree of economic cooperation and mutual dependence, who share a common kitchen and eat meals together” (Steyn, 1995:177). Housing is defined as a variety of processes through which habitable, stable and sustainable public and private residential environments are created for viable households and communities. This recognises that the environment within which a house is situated is as important as the house itself in satisfying the needs and requirements of the occupants¹¹⁸. This section, in discussing issues of the household and the housing structures of the sample population is significant because it unveils a lot of other issues which are directly relevant for issues discussed at a household level.

A variety of household arrangements have become prominent in African people’s lives. The different kinds of households that have been identified in the South African context include single-person households. This is when one person is living by herself or himself. Ziehl added that a single person household has a structure and a specific household size - there is only one position and one person. Ziehl also noted that these are extremely rare among Black South Africans (2002:45). Then there are couple households, which are defined as a household head plus one spouse (Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007:132). There are nuclear

¹¹⁸ A New Housing Policy and Strategy for South Africa 1994, accessed on 04 November 2009 from <http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1994/housing.htm#4.2>

households, which are defined as a household head plus spouse plus children (*ibid.*) Single parent households are defined as a household head plus children (*ibid.*). There are extended households - three generation linear, which are defined as a household head (with or without spouse) plus children plus parent (or parent in-law) or a household head (with or without spouse) plus children plus grandchildren (*ibid.*).

There are three-generation skip, which are defined as a household head (with or without spouse) plus grandchildren but with no children present (*ibid.*). There are multiple-generational households, which are defined as households with great-grand parents and/or great-grandchildren (*ibid.*). There are siblings only households, which are defined as a household head with his or her siblings (*ibid.*). There are complex but related households which are defined as households that do not fit any of the previous categories, but in which everyone is related (directly or indirectly) to the head of the household (*ibid.*). Finally there are complex and unrelated households which are defined as households in which at least one member of the household is not related to the household head (Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007:134).

Wittenberg and Collinson tried to provide a comprehensive list of the different kinds of households that can be found in South Africa society but it seems to me that the hostels in their former sense were either unrepresented or misrepresented by the above categories. Probably there are categories above that one can decide to slot them into but as I argue, that would be a misrepresentation of what they are as well as of the relationships that exist between the different persons at the hostel and in the rural areas. I strongly argue against the classification of the hostel dwellers as belonging to “single-person households” (Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007:136). The category that could be associated with hostel dwellers is that of “complex and unrelated households”. I say it could be because while in most of the cases the hostel dwellers living in one room or block are related; it is not always the case that four people who live in one block house would be related. There are cases where four men all have different surnames, background and origins. Upon living together, they create a new form of brotherhood. My findings indicate that some households qualify to be classified in more than one category.

Furthermore, a number of scholars have investigated whether the issue of extended family living arrangements has or is disappearing in African society and the dynamics related to that

(see Lurie, 2007; Wittenberg and Collinson, 2007; Ziehl, 2001; 2002; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2003, Russell, 2003; Dungumaro, 2008). One important point that I would like to make is that regardless of the stretched out social relations and the different and changing household and housing structures that African families reside in, the concept of family is still very strong. This can partly be proven by the fact that African people, especially migrants as has been shown by the research findings of this study, retain strong ties between rural and urban areas (see Lurie, 2007; Posel, 2003; James, 2001; Wilson, 1972).

As Ziehl argued, it is indeed important to draw “distinctions between cultural ideas about family life (who should be living with whom and how people should be treated) and the composition of household (who is living with whom, sharing resources, etc.)” (2002:28). Siqwana-Ndulo, (2003:410) argued that “[t]he study of African family forms, both in Africa and African diaspora, requires a recognition of the fact that family or household organization is part of a social system with a cultural heritage based on a value system quite distinct from the western”. She further argued that although there have been some changes in the ways African families are organised, the basic difference is that while western marriage is based on individualism and independence, African families are based on principles of collectivity and interdependence.

My study has shown that the Black African people do not make the differentiation between the nuclear family and extended family. For African families, family is family; there is no primary or secondary category. One way that this fact has been communicated is through participants’ making references to their parents or siblings. At some stage of the interview I would hear that the participants’ parents passed away. The next thing s/he would make references to his or her mother as if she is still alive, and when I asked for clarification, that is when s/he would explain that s/he is referring to his aunt. The aunts and uncles that we as Africans call mothers and fathers are normally our father’s younger or bigger brother and our mother’s younger or bigger sisters. However, in *isiZulu*, the other normal or familiar way of referring to aunts and uncles is *ubaba omncane* or *ubaba omdala* and *umamncane* or *umamkhulu*. *Ubaba* means father. *Umama* means mother. *Omncane* means ‘the smaller one’ and *omdala* or *omkhulu* means ‘the older’ or ‘bigger one’.

To make a specific example, Phinda is a male in his mid-20s. He is from Nongoma and lives at the hostel with his girlfriend. His mother passed away nine years ago and his father passed

away 19 years ago. His mother did not get married to his father; he also did not know his father. When his father passed away, his grandmother from his father's side gave or handed Phinda over to his father's younger brother. This *baba omncane* was the one who had to take over the responsibility of being a father to Phinda although his biological father never did that anyway. This is the man that Phinda calls father. On the other hand, while he was still living in the rural areas, he lived with his maternal grandmother, mother and siblings. His mother worked and only came back home twice a month when she had the day-off. So it was through that household arrangement that Phinda got used into calling his grandmother not *gogo* but mother. Now Phinda, his two younger siblings (19 years and 15 years) as well as Phinda's five-year old son all refer to *gogo* as mother because this is the woman who has been with them for as long as they can remember and she continues to take care of their primary needs as is the role of a mother.

Again, from his father's side, his late biological father has 20 or more children from different women and Phinda only knows less than five of his father's children. The man he now calls father has 15 or more children and again they are from different women and he does not know all of them; he knows only eleven. When you talk to him about all his known and unknown step-siblings and half-siblings and cousins, he consistently refuses to call them cousins or step-sisters, step-brothers or half-sisters or half-brothers, he would tell you that those are his brothers and sisters, nothing more and nothing less (Interview with Phinda Msomi, 20 December 2010).

Although Lurie (2007:94) has been able to prove that the average household size has decreased, this does not in any way weaken the concept of family (what is generally called the extended family) for African people. Wittenberg and Collinson argued that in no way do their findings imply that African families are moving towards the Western understandings of families, i.e. single; couple and nuclear. They further argued that three-generation linear and complex households are less likely to disappear (2007:135). This idea of three-generation and complex households is perfectly demonstrated by the story of Phinda above.

In addition, I want to argue that those household structures are on the increase (see Posel, 2001; Steyn, 1995). This however does not negate the fact that "a variety of family and

household structures”¹¹⁹ can be found in South African society today. Ziehl defined a household structure as a particular configuration of relationships between individuals who live together at one point in time (2002:35) (see Russell, 2003; Steyn, 1995). The way one defines ‘family’¹²⁰ and ‘household’ becomes critical in the conclusions about the changes that are taking place in these contexts. I find Russell’s conception and understanding of Black South African households quite useful in this context. She argued that many urban dwellers are still embedded in a broader set of relations and that they will return to their base in the extended family eventually. In other words, one needs to understand not only the current position of the individual, but rather the trajectory, i.e. their “life course” (Russell, 2003).

There are a number of housing structures that this thesis is directly concerned with: hostels, CRUs, informal settlements, homestead and RDP houses. The first four housing structures have been part of the research sites whereby most of the data has been collected. They have continuously also been found to be highly gendered and contested spaces, hence I have decided to label them ‘*spaces of perplexity*’. The fifth is included because, like the community residential units, RDP houses were formally introduced at the advent of democracy and are a direct poverty alleviation strategy on the part of the government. All (except the homestead) of the above-mentioned housing structures have characteristics that are similar. Most if not all are located in or close to the townships, accommodating people in the lower stratum of the economic hierarchy.

CRUs and RDP houses have been government’s direct intervention to redress the apartheid past. Hostels and informal settlements have successfully resisted their abolition by the democratic government. The difference between the latter two is that they served different purposes during the apartheid era and while the government wanted and needed the hostels, it did not want the informal settlements. Informal settlements served a purpose which was to the detriment of the apartheid regime, which was the influx of unregistered Black people into the cities. On the other hand, they both housed people from the rural areas and were normally seen as a point of entry into the urban areas. In addition to hostels and informal settlements, I

¹¹⁹ Household structure is a particular configuration of relationships between individuals who live together at one point in time (Steyn, 1995 in Ziehl, 2002:35)

¹²⁰ Ziehl has defined a family as a social institution comprising an ideological component (ideas about marriage, procreation, residential patterns, etc.) and a concrete component in the form of residential patterns or household arrangements (2002:37, see also Ziehl, 1997).

argue that the establishment of the CRUs and RDP housing structures has exacerbated changes in the household, generational and gender changes.

As can be clearly seen:

“Housing the Nation.... is one of the greatest challenges facing the Government of National Unity. The extent of the challenges derives not only from the enormous size of the housing backlog and the desperation and impatience of the homeless, but stems also from the extremely complicated bureaucratic, administrative, financial and institutional framework inherited from the previous government” (South African Government Information, 1994).

Labour migration in South Africa was one of the first major processes that brought about drastic changes in the household size and structure of the African family.¹²¹ It is from this very notion that Bozzoli questioned theories which did not explain why it had to be men who left and women who were left behind. In her Marxist, feminist approach she chose to focus on the ‘struggle’, i.e. domestic struggle¹²² rather than the ‘structure’, i.e. of the household (1983).

¹²¹ What is important to acknowledge about the process of labour migration and ‘families divided’ is that views will differ. For example, Wilson provides a long list towards the end of his book of the advantages and disadvantages of the migrant labour system in South Africa. Murray (1981) also does not want to believe Banghart’s argument when he argued that “... I found little or no evidence that labour migration is detrimental or disruptive, in any particular group’s viewpoint. In most cases, I think, it can be shown that the opposite is the case that labour migrant has a stabilising influence on the group and in particular on its social structure” (1970:102). In addition to these views, my own stance is that it only makes sense for anybody who is pushed into a particular, especially negative position to try and find positive aspects of the negative situation that he or she is pushed into. For example, the concept of ‘independence’ that was continuously used by men in mentioning the things they like about living in a hostel. Another famous response from the married men was that since they only go home a few times a month, this reduces their chances to fight with their wives. The point is that the couple would rather not spend the few days together fighting because it is known that after a few days, the husband would be gone for a long time; that is why they would rather appreciate the few days spent together in the village or even when the wives are visiting. So this implies that creating a distance between married people cannot only have negative effects. Hence I believe it is safe to say that there is systematic contradicting and complex trends taking places in the realm of rural-urban connections caused by labour migration to the household and gender relations.

¹²² She further differentiated between ‘internal domestic struggle’ and ‘external domestic struggle’. The internal domestic struggle concerns the extent to which the domestic sphere is the site of labour, income and property relations. External domestic struggle relates to the conflicts and compromises which take place between the domestic sphere and the wider capitalist society (Bozzoli, 1983:147).

Ngwane, on the other hand, argued that there is no reason to suppose that the ‘fluidity’ of the household originated with migrant labour (see also Amoateng, *et al.*, 2007). He argued that it only intensified the shifts and complicated the means by which they were to be made sense of (2003:699). The migration process itself has undergone a number of stages, which have been constantly and inconsistently bringing about change in the construction, definition and organisation of the household as well as gender relations. Hunter contended that it is a clear fact that most young African men and women find it difficult to establish a marital home with any degree of geographical and economic stability (2006:155).

There are many factors that have contributed to the changing housing and household structures; it is not only the size of the house (settlement) or household, but there are health factors such as HIV/AIDS and economic factors such as unemployment which play a bigger role than they played three decades ago. In addition to HIV/AIDS and high unemployment rates, the RDP houses and informal settlements can be further understood as having contributed to the presence of child-headed and an increasing number of female-headed households. In the traditional sense of an African family, there is actually no space for a child-headed household.¹²³ The children that are now heading households should be living with their grandparents and/or their relatives. If there are no relatives, there is a point at which your neighbours become part of your family in the African communities, as much as I have hinted with hostel dwellers that upon reaching the hostel and living with people who are totally unrelated to each other, form a new bond of brotherhood.

I do not mean to argue that it is wrong for people of adult age to move out of their parents’ households (to go live in an RDP house, CRU or informal settlement) but it is clear that the traditional foundations of the African society do not allow for that to happen successfully. Deprivation, dispossession, inequality, unemployment, increased HIV/AIDS rates, and slow

¹²³ There is *isiZulu* saying which goes ‘awukho umuzi wentombazane’ (there is no homestead for a girl) which basically is a phrase not only discouraging but also disregarding an unmarried female to head a household. This phrase is sometimes used when a female is doing well enough that she wants to move out and have her own house, so the rule is she should not, she should remain in her father’s house until she gets married. This is why also when a woman gets pregnant before getting married, the child she gives birth to is generally known as the child of her mother and father (grandparents). This is because they technically take care of the child including providing shelter, also that an unmarried woman is not really capable of doing anything sound- because she does not have the support or leadership of a man, other than the one who is her father. The concept of a child-headed household is traditionally unheard of in the African communities. Bozzoli argued that even “single parent autocrat was lessened by the presence of other adults” in the household (1991:44)

rates of higher education attainment are some of the characteristics challenging the foundations of our society, those of interdependence and collectivity.

Perhaps the problem with the democratic government in terms of the housing crisis is that it continues to push Black South Africans into the small segregated spaces that the apartheid government allocated for Black people. This is where the question of housing becomes relevant to the question of land. Realistically speaking, there is minimal urban and rural land available to previously disadvantaged communities. In the urban areas, one has to be in a financially favourable position in order to be able to afford to buy land and/or proper and satisfying housing for his or her family. The low income of the majority of the Black community does not match the cost of urban land for residential development. For most, it's not an issue of choosing where to live; rather it is being pushed into particular spaces (see Godehart, 2006).

5.7.1 Household Headship and Gender Relations

This section looks at intra-household, familial and inter-generational relations. I try to make sense of the household both as a site of struggle and one of harmony. I am in agreement with Mosoetsa in arguing that “[t]he broader societal norms and values in which households are embedded also have a deep influence on struggles and decision making within the household” (2011:132). This is the reason why my participants were more than just individuals; I actually went to households and lived in their communities, i.e. hostel and the village in order to have a better understanding of their everyday life experiences. From this research I have come to appreciate the fact that specific variables such as gender, generation, marital status and seniority are important factors in understanding household relations and dynamics as these relate to the consumption, production and allocative patterns within the household, (*ibid.*). Mosoetsa found that “the increasing inability of men to earn income and the greater access to income by women by means of state transfers has led to serious tensions in households, not only between men and women, but also between young women and older women”. The evidence she presented in her book made it clear that gender and age are critical components of the relationships that shape inter-household dynamics (2011:121). While she found that inter-generational conflict often arose because of lack of resources, I found that the primary reason for vivid inter-generational conflict are the “rights” that have

been given to women and children by the government. i.e. Mr Makhathini and IFP ward councillor's comments.

Mr Makhathini: Your rights would not allow me to have a driver's license at this age. They close doors for us, they say I am too old now and I can't see properly in my eyes and they change their books all the time, whereas they never changed during our times. You see this current governance; there are many ways in which it has enslaved us. There are many laws that hinder us from doing what we would like to do.

Nomkhosi: But if you were to get the licence this year, would you buy a car?

Mr Makhathini: Yes, as it is I am really wishing for a car.

(Interview with Mr Makhathini 16 January 2011)

The above extract shows that Mr Makhathini has a lot of issues about how the country is run, especially compared to the apartheid era. Mr Makhathini and Councillor Gwala's views stood out for me from everybody else's. Councillor Gwala (IFP) comes from Kranskop, came to the hostel in mid-1960s, has no formal education, and has three wives, two in the rural areas and one who lives with him at KwaMashu. He has 18 children. Some are in the rural areas and most male children are scattered all over the hostel. They all have rooms in the CRUs in different zones and they serve as their father's body guards. There are certain similarities that I have noted between Mr. Makhathini and Councillor Gwala's perceptions. Both arrived at the hostel around the same time, in polygamous marriages, and have strong views against the government, especially about the 'rights' that have been given to women and children. They believed the government came to take away what was rightfully theirs, which are their families and the roles and responsibilities of running a family. Councillor Gwala said that he really does not understand and dismisses the role of the state in his family, between him and his wives and children.

"There is no such thing as rape between two married people", he uttered during the interview. He said the government is confused and is confusing the whole country "government is failing to look after issues like crime and unemployment in the country but it is busy interfering in personal and family matters. The government is making it even more difficult for families to raise children with morals and values because children have 'rights' as well. If the parent disciplines the child, the child can go and report abuse to the police and the police will arrest the parent, while the parent is in prison, who is supposed to look after and provide for this child?"(Interview with Cllr Gwala)

Councillor Gwala also severely criticised the government for providing social grants saying it is the reason why "children are going to continue giving babies without fathers and home

because they get paid to do that”.¹²⁴ Basically what I try to show here is that there is a lot of conflict in intra-household and inter-generational relations. Unfortunately, the easiest structure to take the blame for these conflicts is the government. As seen above, the ways that the government has used to try and stabilise the country are the same ways that are being criticised by the hostel dwellers and their families as causing problems in intra-household relations, i.e. CRUs, social grants, and women’s and children’s rights.

Posel’s data showed that the household head is usually the oldest person in the household and the highest income earner and this is linked to the decision making responsibility. She further argued that the fact that the head is usually the oldest person in the household may reflect structures of authority that are age-related (2001). For the African community, it is important to know that although it is mainly gender, age and income that determine the headship, there is a time when income and gender does not become a defining feature in headship.

For example in the Magwaza household at eShowe, I interviewed Mrs Magwaza who lived with her retired and crippled husband, her mother-in-law (more than 90 years old), her children and grandchildren. Her husband was a migrant worker until he retired and her sons are migrant workers. When I asked her who the household head was, she pointed at the mother-in-law, who was sun bathing in their yard. Nobody knew exactly how old she was. The mother-in-law only gets an old age pension as income. Her household headship position is more out of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) than the actual roles and responsibilities that had to be performed by a household head.

What is important to keep in mind about household headship is that it may not be uniform across different cultures and contexts (*ibid.*). Posel argued that in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal specifically, there is an increase in female-headed households. She further argued that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to be concentrated at the end of the income distribution. Hunter from his work at Mandeni in Sundumbili Township and Isithebe informal settlements found that men can earn ten times more than women. He added the fact that retrenched men can still be in a better position than women who are in informal jobs (2005). My research at the hostel has also substantiated this fact that even when men start informal businesses, they manage to stay out of poverty. Female-headed

¹²⁴ This specific point was also made by a woman from eMpangeni, referring to her own children who have not finished school but are busy making babies.

households that are particularly vulnerable are those that contain unemployed male adults (Posel, 2001:653).

An important gender and household related factor is that whether the women head households with the assistance of social grants, the sexual economy or casual and/or informal employment, their roles as household heads do not diminish their traditional roles of household reproduction which includes child care. Instead, their responsibilities get added on as they take on men's traditional roles and responsibilities concerning 'larger decisions' about household investments (Posel, 2001, Bozzoli, 1983). Gender inequalities remain endemic in South Africa, regardless of the changes that have taken place since the post-apartheid era (Shefer *et al.*, 2008).

While children's and adults' positions have changed in the household realm, it does not imply that gender roles and responsibilities have been radically restructured. In total, women's responses to their situations can be seen as a mixture of assertiveness and conformism (Bozzoli, 1991:237). Ramphela argued that conformism is also a necessary part of creating harmony under such severe space constraints (1993:129). As in other parts of the [country] these new developments did not challenge existing gender stereotypes about women head-on. In many respects they worked to reinforce them in new settings. Nevertheless they did necessitate some adjustments in attitudes of women to the benefit of the [households and gender relations] (Walker, 1990: 332).

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed patterns of integration and disintegration that take place throughout the life trajectories of the hostel dwellers and the families linked to them. It has discussed struggles and changes in meanings and identities, negotiated, renegotiated, contested and reconstructed spaces and formations. The different formations examined in the context of the rural-urban connections continue to be major points of harmonies and tensions, agreements and contradictions, securities and insecurities and triumphs and struggles. Formations are constructed and defined according to the needs and functions of the particular community at a particular time and space. Gender dynamics and challenged patriarchal dominance represents the [old] struggles in new ways and different times. Lack of space,

overcrowding, uncleanliness, unemployment, social reproduction and social inequality have always existed, but both men and women are finding new ways of dealing with them. Women have not merely been passive victims of externally imposed codes of behaviour and men have also not been constant and consistent forces working against women.

Although it has been argued that prioritizing one's gender may leave little room for stepping outside the on-going current construction of gender (McClintock, 1995) I argue that whether it relates to social grants, rural-urban migration, casual employment, informal employment, or transactional sex, what is clear is that all of these are issues of struggle, struggles of mostly women; struggles to make a livelihood, struggles with and through the self, the partner/spouse, household members, community, society, and the state. Undeniably, hostels continue to be highly gendered spaces which further complicate the household structures. Household structure, generational and gender changes have been exacerbated by the mushrooming of informal settlements, and the establishment of CRUs and RDP housing. This chapter has tried to show that people are much more complex creatures than economic agency allows. I have provided a deeper sense of how cultural agency is part of making sense of people's worlds. All of this happens through a dynamic process with no fixed destination, but what is obvious is that people are producing their own spaces, meanings, and identities that do not always fit with their traditional cultural norms.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6. Introduction

Examining change at the hostel has demanded that I pay specific attention to issues of livelihoods; spatiality, i.e. the production of space and place; and be sensitive to gender issues as well as engage with rural-urban migration and movements. The critical part of this change involved the conversion of the hostel system into the Community Residential Units Programme. The conversion issue can be traced back to mid-1980s where it was strongly proposed by the liberation movement and widely discussed and rejected by the majority of the hostel community in South Africa. Using KwaMashu hostel as a starting point allowed me to move from the ‘micro’ into the ‘macro’, from the hostel community to South African society. Through the regressive-progressive method, I was able to get the bigger historical and geographical picture by not only looking at the migrants’ lives within the hostel but also in their homes at the rural areas which are at eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa and look at the hostel from its establishment till to-date. I was able to trace the peculiar rural-urban movements and migration as well as livelihood strategies and struggles.

My research process reminded me that “[h]istories of place are never just a straightforward account of ‘the facts.’ Like the life histories with which they are closely intertwined, they are always multiple, contested, deeply politicized, produced in specific contexts, and made to serve the needs of the present” (Hart, 2002:9). I have used KwaMashu hostel as a particular vantage point in time to trace the apartheid legacy in one vital African township area, to see the impact, results, and consequences of the shift of the ruling government from RDP policies to neoliberal policies and the effects that move had on the livelihood strategies in the country. This thesis showed that the story is no longer about the things that have happened, but it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of hostel dwellers are constructed and deconstructed.

This study has contributed specifically to the literature on hostels and broadly to gender and sexuality; work, land and livelihoods literature in the post-apartheid South Africa. One thing that stands out starkly from the data is the contradictions brought about in the post-apartheid

era. These contradictions can be strongly felt and seen by everybody at every level or formation, i.e. spatially, gender, rural-urban, livelihood making culturally and spiritually.

Chapter one introduced the perplexity that I have seen to be taking place at the KwaMashu hostel. I introduced the key themes that emerged, i.e. spatiality, hostel re-development/CRU, gender, inter-generations, livelihoods and politics. I introduced my main arguments which I have restated above. Chapter two primarily dealt with the key conceptual and theoretical frameworks and research methodologies adopted in researching and writing this thesis. The multi-sited historical ethnography which I conducted at KwaMashu hostel and in some of the northern KwaZulu-Natal rural areas which are linked to the hostel, namely, eShowe, eMpangeni, Nongoma, and Hlabisa was informed by a couple of research methodologies. I made great use of the extended case study method with a rejection of 'case study' because it assumes detachment of a 'case' or place from other places. The production of space and rural-urban continuum theoretical frameworks were able to show the interconnectedness of people, places and spaces. It showed the interdependence and intertwinement of things mostly seen as separate and dichotomous. In addition to these I employed feminist theory to balance my presentation, not only of gender but also of the research methodologies which I employed in collecting data.

Chapter three was about the historical overview as much as it was about the current on-going state of the hostel. It tried to show the general trends of rural-urban connections not only in KwaZulu-Natal province, but in South Africa as a whole as well as beyond. Chapter four focused on the challenges that are being faced by rural-urban migrants. It was about livelihoods-making and the challenges that migrants encounter in the processes of making livelihoods. Chapter four rigorously moved beyond looking at land, labour and livelihoods as separate; instead it used the migrants' voices to show the linkages that exist and continuous changes between land, labour and livelihoods. In this chapter I also showed the key but ambiguous role played by social grants in the lives of women. Chapter five built on the previous chapters by outlining and discussing the various dimensions of cultural formations. These formations relate to the different elements at which the perplexity takes place. This chapter has three sub-sections: in the first I thoroughly engaged with gender issues, in the second, cultural and spiritual issues, and finally I discussed political issues.

6.1 Main Arguments

(i) I have argued that gender and sexuality are centrally important constitutive forces in the making of the hostels and the livelihoods of the hostel dwellers. This thesis provides an analysis of how gender hierarchies are constructed, legitimated, challenged and maintained so as to fit the ideal setting for the livelihood making of the dwellers. “Perhaps the most dramatic shift in my own thinking came through asking questions about how hierarchies such as those of gender are constructed and legitimizes. The emphasis in ‘how’ suggests a study of processes, not of origins, of multiple rather than single causes, of rhetoric or discourse rather than ideology or consciousness” (Scott, 1988:4).

(ii) I have argued that there are on-going rural-urban connections but in the context of the contradictory and unfavourable collapse of livelihoods procurement at both ends. African migrant workers continue to move from rural to urban areas in search of employment even when there are inadequate employment opportunities at the other end. While land and livestock in other parts of South Africa (i.e. Eastern Cape) continue to play a prominent role as a source of wealth, my research in northern KwaZulu-Natal indicated the opposite. Unfavourable weather conditions and a shortage of human capital are the two main reasons for this trend. In this study, I have looked at rural-urban migration as a means of multiplying and/or diversifying livelihood opportunities. What I have tried to show is that rural-urban connections did not originate with the democratic era in South Africa (1994), nor with the abolition of influx control (1986) or the apartheid era (1948) but with the actual production of the hostels as gendered spaces which was influenced by the establishment of the spatial division of labour through the labour migration system in South Africa. The idea of seeing the urban as sites of production and rural spaces as sites of reproduction is being highly contested by the changing social forces.

(iii) I have argued that social grants play a vital but ambiguous role in supplementing and sometimes substituting household income both in the rural and urban areas and continue to make a mark in conditions where waged labour is diminishing and informal work is prevalent but inadequate. The role of social grants has been imperative in all the processes of seeking employment, making a livelihood and supplementing any kind of income in a particular household. KwaMashu hostel and its links to the rural areas is a perfect example of

communities which primarily rely on informal work as well as social grants both in the rural and urban areas. Social grants, as a result of their gendered nature have a tendency to burden female recipients with responsibilities of care and maintenance.

Considering all the above, in an effort to comprehend the on-going changes, in chapter one, I have termed the hostels 'spaces of perplexity'. I have argued that hostels are spaces of perplexity through looking at the social (gender, cultural, spiritual and familial), political, spatial and economic changes that have taken place there especially through and because of the on-going CRU conversion process. Although I have painted a highly paradoxical picture of the hostels in chapter one, I maintain throughout the thesis that hostels are still a preferable form of accommodation for many rural-urban migrants, primarily because they are economically cheap, socially there are relations of brotherhood and sisterhood, generally known as *umkhaya* and because of long trends of migration of different generations in various households and communities. Seeing hostels as spaces of perplexity comprehensively negates the idea of hostels as neat little uniform formations; instead hostels are full of variation, confusion, multiplicity and differentiation. This conception acknowledges the elements of history; of change and elements of continuity in hostels. I show that there is conflict in ideas and visions between the government and the citizens. I prove that "the sociological convulsions underpinning South Africa's transition have not been neat" (Sitas, 2004:831).

While the hostel(s) have always been seen as either *umuzi wezinsizwa* - place for men or *indawo yabantu basemakhaya* - rural people's space, after living at the hostel for a period of close to two years, I can conclude that hostels are way more complex than the policy documents could hint or how dwellers define them. By spaces of perplexity I am trying to capture the multiple meanings and various experiences that are embedded at the hostel through the lives of the dwellers and their families who are both geographically further away economically and socio-politically closer to them. It is a space full of conflict of interests (between the government and dwellers; residents and migrants; men and women; elders and young people; IFP-NFP and ANC), confusion (about roles and responsibilities) and challenges (lack of employment and inability to build a homestead and the HIV-AIDS pandemic).

What the hostels have turned out to be is a highly complicated form of social settings which cannot be explained solely by the past (although some people are still stuck with the old frames of reference when they refer to hostels). It is also difficult to rely on the current policy language because it leaves out many people (men) who do not identify with CRUs because they do not have families in the urban areas and they are also against the presence of women and children in these spaces; and women who are not interested in making families but making a living. It is also difficult to rely on the current policy frame of reference because it deems the presence of shacks 'illegal' and the people who live in them (women) 'unlawful', whereas some of the people who live in shacks have been there since the abolition of influx controls, if not earlier than that.

While hostels were once regarded as alienated and marginalised from both the townships and the informal settlements (see Zulu, 1993), I have shown in the previous chapters that this is not the case with KwaMashu. In chapter one I showed how the integrations and disintegrations, connections and disconnections and contradictions have resulted in perplexity. In chapter two, I showed how they have been integrated theoretically and methodologically, and in chapter three I focus on the way they have been integrated through shacks. In chapter four I showed how the hostels have been integrated through work and livelihoods procurement and in chapter five I showed how they have been integrated through various forms of cultural formations.

6.2 Development Process-related Reasons for Perplexity

In chapter one, I introduced the various levels at which the perplexity takes place, i.e. politically, spatially, inter-generationally, gender, and livelihoods procurement. In chapter two, while I discussed theories and methods, I also used depictions to trace the changes in gender, politics, space at community and societal levels and rural-urban connections. In chapter three I began to discuss the politically-related reasons for perplexity as well as the changes in the hostel at large. In chapter four I dealt thoroughly with livelihood procurement-related perplexity; and in chapter five gendered-related as well as political and cultural reasons for perplexity. While I introduced and discussed the development process, I did not clearly spell out how it could be a cause of perplexity. It is for this reason that I am

concluding with it now. The development process can be understood as bringing changes which are not all good or favoured by the hostel dwellers.

- Displacement of hostel dwellers is an unavoidable process in the different stages of development as they are being moved from one spot to another. Some get moved and are never re-allocated.
- The current concentration of people both within and around the hostel means that the upgrading must involve a degree of de-densification. A fraction of the dwellers would have to be found land or housing elsewhere and this might be unpopular with those being relocated.
- People are moved from a single storey hostel to a multi storey hostel instead of being moved from a hostel to family housing/home. This results in refusal to move into a room where R114 would be paid instead of paying nothing as in the old block (single storey hostel).
- Transformation has only partially taken place in the hostel infrastructure, now it needs to take place in the socio-psychological frames of the dwellers as well as the township community. South Africa did not only go through political transformation but it also entailed “transformation in the meaning of spaces” (Elder, 2003a:4). I have argued earlier that the problem with the democratic government in terms of the housing crisis is that it continues to push Black South Africans into the small segregated spaces that the apartheid government had allocated for them. This is where the question of housing becomes relevant to the question of land.
- The changing of hostels into family housing did not consider the changes in the demographics of the hostel population as well as the changes in rural-urban flows. The articulation of rural-urban connections is continuously being reconfigured through shifting meanings and spaces.

6.3 Gender-related Perplexity

The main problem with gender issues at the hostel is that the majority of men still feel that the hostel is a men’s place, whereas women mostly feel that the hostel is for all. The other problem related to gender at the hostel is ‘rights’, women’s rights to be more specific. Below is an example from a focus group discussion with a women soccer team (facilitated on 21

January 2011) which shows the different expectations of the two genders and how 'rights' are used:

Participant 1: These old men from the rural areas say it's a taboo for us to play soccer (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Participant 2: Some men say these women (*labafazi*) put on pants and even worse they put on shorts (*izikhindi*) and play soccer (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Participant 3: Some say it's because we do not have anything better to do and we go to the soccer field to chase/run after the soccer ball (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

These women believe that they have a right to play soccer as much as men. They are happy with themselves and claimed that soccer helped with many aspects of their lives, including health, psychological and physical fitness and takes them away from the irrelevant fights that women always have when they get together. More interestingly, they mentioned that it helps them to be fit so that when their partners hit them, they can fight back. This indicates that if women were generally physically fit enough, there would be more physical fights between men and women as compared to gender-based violence which mostly refers to men physically abusing women. Most of the responses of the two genders showed vividly that the expectations of men and women are different. Men and women both have different expectations from the government. Men and women also have different expectations of each other, as the following discussion illustrates:

Participant 1: The problem is that you meet a guy and get into a relationship with him and eventually you realise that he does not do anything for you.

Nomkhosi: Like what?

Participant 1: To pay *lobolo* for me because I have lived with him

Nomkhosi: Okay, you mean when you lived with him

Participant 1: Even if you were not living together the same principle should apply, he should pay *lobolo* for you.

Participant 2: There is a guy that I even chased away because I did not see progress (*inqubekela phambili*).

Nomkhosi: You chased him away?

Participant 2: Yes.

Nomkhosi: Did you live together?

Participant 2: Yes.

Nomkhosi: Did he have his own room?

Participant 2: Yes he did and I told him to go back to his room. I used to have to ask for permission to go wherever I wanted to go and he had restrictions, I could not go where I wanted to go. I really love soccer and I travel even to Johannesburg if there

are big matches and he had a problem with that (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Most men believe that the hostel is not a place when they can find themselves wives. They believe the hostel is a dirty place both figuratively and literally. The most confusing part about gender dynamics at the hostel is that most men have argued that it would have been better if women lived in separate blocks from men. This means they would be happy with the development/refurbishment process provided that they would not be forced to share all spaces with women. They could share the hostel at large but not spaces like bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. When I asked women about these suggestions they said:

Participant 1: That won't be right - we will be lonely without them - they will be too far from us if we lived in separate blocks, (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Participant 2: They won't be able to live without us, (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Participant 3: The man we share a unit with was placed with other men and he specifically asked the block chairman to be placed with women (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

Participant 3 lives with her primary school-going daughter, the next bedroom has a man who lives by himself and has wives in the rural areas and the young woman in the third bedroom lives with her primary school-going daughter as well. The man has his sons visit him occasionally but they never sleep over because they have their own rooms at the hostel. These women believe that this man benefits a lot through living with them. For example, the house is always clean; secondly they can and do sometimes satisfy each other sexually and keep that a secret.

According to Mr Makhathini, the problem with women and their rights is as follows:

Nomkhosi: Is it wrong for us as women to have rights?

Mr Makhathini: The problem is that you were not told where they stopped, they just told you it's your rights and there was no break.

Nomkhosi: Where do you think our rights should end?

Mr Makhathini: When you were given these rights, you were also supposed to be told to align them with *inhlonipho* (respect), you guys stopped *ukuhlonipha* (to respect). When you are supposed to give *inhlonipho*, you say it's your right [to do the opposite].

Nomkhosi: How do you mean?

Mr Makhathini: Can I hear an 'amen'? [meaning: do you agree with me?]

Nomkhosi: There is no 'amen'.

Mr Makhathini: It's okay because you are going to say it's your right. Every time you have to show respect you will say it's your right. This thing is totally confused. You know as you are this age and I am this age (65 years), you are really my child (*uyingane yami uqobo*). If I were to tell you how I am expecting you to behave in front of me, you would tell me that it's your right to do what you want to do and also that you have grown enough (*iminyaka iyakuvumela*). You and your rights take away our position and powers to rule (*nina namalungelo enu nisincisha ukuphatha*). You have deprived us of the power and only yours passed (Interview with Mr Makhathini 16 January 2011).

While there is a lot of tension and bitterness in the way that Mr Makhathini related the whole story of gender at the hostel and about gender in South Africa at large. It should be noted that his views are a good representation of the views of many older generation men at the hostel.

6.4 Inter-generational-related Perplexity

The issue of differences in age at the hostel is a major one. While intergenerational-differences have always existed in hostels, the reason why it is such a big issue now is because of all the different influences which are being felt mainly by youth and implemented at the hostel with sometimes very traditional men mostly from northern KwaZulu-Natal.

Nomkhosi: How did you facilitate cleaning roaster since you are two women living with one old man in the unit?

Participant 1: We just divide the cleaning between the two of us and do not include him.

Participant 2: But sometimes we do get offended especially if his sons come in to have a meal with their father and do not clean up.

Nomkhosi: What do you do in that case?

Participant 1: He is too old for us [64 years] to even try and negotiate or discuss cleaning duties with him.

Participant 2: The reason we are even complaining about that is because of his sons, otherwise we would not even be paying attention because he is old, we understand that he is old and he is a father to us. His sons are old-enough, they can be able to clean if they come and mess up (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

On a different note, I asked the participants how they felt about the issue of firstly living with people they respect and regard as old, hence fatherly and or motherly and secondly have their partners/boyfriends coming in the same unit and to sleep over night in the same 'house'. This is what they had to say:

Participant 1: My room is like my house, so when I enter my room, it's my business and not theirs.

Participant 2: I would not mind to have to change boyfriends in front of an older married couple because I am doing the wife a favour so that she would not be worried about me being single and think that I am sleeping with her man, its better they see me with my boyfriends.

Nomkhosi: Is it really that easy?

Participant 3: We would be going to my bed and not theirs, we only meet/share the [kitchen,] toilet and bathroom.

Participant 4: In my case I can say it's difficult, because the people I live with are old. If am bringing my boyfriend to sleep over; I make sure that they do not see that. He has to come at night and also leave early morning while they are still sleeping. [She is 25 years and the couple she lives with is in their late 40s].

Participant 2: They also do not respect me because they also sleep with each other when I am in the same house/unit, I also have feelings that I need to satisfy.

[Everybody laughs]

Participant 5: Yes they do that, but who are we speaking about? Elders! They are older than you. You should be respecting them because of their age (Focus Group Discussion, 21 January 2011).

This clearly shows that *abantu abayi nganxanye bengemanzi*, which implies that the young women alone do not agree with each other about values and principles on inter-generational relations. As I have said earlier in the thesis, there are many young people who do and say things that they would never do or say if they were in the rural areas, in the presence of their parents and families.

6.5 Reasons for and against the Hostel

Approximately less than 5% of the people I met with either for an interview, or formal or informal discussion and conversations came to the hostel for reasons other than to look for job opportunities. These are the people who either came to look after their male partners, or came for medical attention or traditional attention or in order to apply for social grants because of lack of efficient government services in the rural areas. These people have mostly remained at the hostel even after their goals of coming to the hostel have been achieved.

While the hostel has emerged as the most hated space by men, it is also the most preferred space by men. While the hostel is the most criticised space by women, it is also the most desired space by women, especially while they are still based in the rural areas. The table

below shows the different reasons which were mentioned by people as to why they love the hostel as well as why they do not like the hostel.

Table 6.1 Hostels as a Space of Perplexity

No.	Reasons for the hostel	Reasons against the hostel
1	Independence	Presence of women
2	Privacy	Presence of children
3	Freedom	Presence of shacks
4	Low rent (or no rent)	Crime
5	Work opportunities	Violence
6	Free basic services	Uncleanliness
7	Easy access to public transport	Overcrowding
8	Easy access to shops	Alcohol abuse
9	Development/CRUs	No safety and security
10	Networking	Lack of recreational facilities
11	Guidance from elders	Lack of respect
12	Cheap lifestyle	Noise
13	Preservation of rural lifestyle	Co-habiting (<i>umkipito</i>)
14	Family and regional-connection support structures	No political freedom
15	Long family traditions of migration to hostels	N/A
16	Good informal business opportunities	N/A

The reasons for and against the hostel are not listed according to any order. The items in the first column also do not have any relationship to the items on the second column. Although there were similar trends between the reasons stated by men and the reasons stated by women, these reasons have not been presented as such. However, it is important to note that the trends these reasons took are similar to what I have presented from the views of men and

women about the hostel throughout the thesis. These views relate to their expectations, relations, reasons why they are at the hostel, etc.

In conducting this study, I feel like I have waved a flag to the South African community of scholars about the current state of the former single sex hostels in the country. I have done so because of lack of recent scholarly work on the hostels. Hostels offer a crystallised vantage point through which the observer can see the continuously evolving relationships, processes, production of meanings, spaces and places, rural-urban connections and disconnections, redefinition and renegotiation of household, sexual and gender roles, relations and responsibilities. In addition, conducting this research has allowed me to understand many aspects of my own sex, gender, race, class and position in society. I have been exposed to and experienced many interesting things that most South African scholars have not experienced because of the plus 16-month period that I spent at the hostel as well the time spent in the rural areas to collect data. In the process I have been loved and cared for, I have made friends and met family.

6.6 Limitations of this Study

My research project is not just a 'case study' of the KwaMashu hostel. By tracing relations and connections between the hostel and the rural areas, I have been able to make a set of arguments about wider forces that shape and are shaped by what is going on within the hostel. At the same time, if I had worked in a different hostel, I would have uncovered a different set of dynamics. The point about using a particular site as a vantage point is that the way the dynamics unfold is normally determined by the specific site that was used for departure.

It is important for me to note that the visits I made to the rural areas were brief relative to the time I spent in the hostel. Equivalent depth of research in rural areas of northern KwaZulu-Natal and in other rural regions would undoubtedly reveal new and additional insights.

For future research, I would suggest the need for more ethnographic, intensive and comparative studies specifically on the hostels and in South Africa generally. It would also be fruitful to conduct studies which examine the impact of the kind of housing the South African

government provides for the poor, i.e. RDP and CRUs. It would be interesting to examine what impact the new kinds of settlements have on the cultural value systems and norms of the Black African people.

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 2. Interview with Bongani Sithole, 25 May 2009 (KwaMashu hostel)
 3. Interview with Thokozani Mhlongo, 26 May 2009 (KwaMashu hostel)
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 18. Interview with Siboniso Mkhize, 28 May 2009 (KwaMashu hostel)
 19. Interview with Alfred Mkhize, 29 July 2009; 24 May 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
 20. Interview with Wilson Bhengu, 08 July 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
 21. Interview with Musawenkosi Vezi, 13 July 2010; 26 November 2010; 16 January 2011; 29 April 2011 (KwaMashu hostel)

¹²⁵ This is the place where the person was interviewed from.

22. Interview with Nkosinathi Ndlovu, 08 July 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
23. Interview with Phumlani Dube, 29 June 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
24. Interview with Njabulo Mbatha, 10 August 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
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31. Interview with Sibongiseni Gcaba, 28 May 2009 (KwaMashu hostel)
32. Interview with Mboneni Chiliza, 02 July 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
33. Interview with Vusokwakhe Zondi, 12 November 2010, 12 October 2011 (KwaMashu hostel)
34. Interview with Ayanda Khumalo, 12 November 2010 (KwaMashu hostel)
35. Interview with Mzwakhe Zondo, 24 July 2010 (eMpangeni)
36. Interview with Andile Mbonambi, 23 July 2010 (eMpangeni)
37. Interview with Thabane Dlomo, 03 August 2010 (eShowe)
38. Interview with Khethokwakhe, Masuku 24 July 2010 (eShowe)
39. Interview with Phinda Msomi, 18 August 2010; 20 December 2010; 14 January 2011 (Nongoma and KwaMashu hostel)
40. Interview with Siphosethu Ndebele, 17 August 2010; 15 December 2011; 25 December 2011 (Nongoma)
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Hostel Dwellers

A. PERSONAL

1. Name
1. Gender
2. Age
3. What is your home language?
4. Where were you born?
5. Where is your home now?
6. Are you married?
7. If yes, to how many wives?
8. Where does she live? Where do they live?
9. If you are not married, are you in a relationship?
10. If yes, how many partners do you have?
11. Do you have children?
12. If yes, how many children?
13. If yes, where do they live?
14. How old are they?

B. EDUCATION

15. Did you go to school?
16. If yes, you went up to which level?
17. If no, why?
18. Did you get any training to enhance your job search opportunities?
19. If yes where and when?

C. HOSTEL

20. When did you start living at the hostel?
21. Have you lived outside the hostel since then?
22. If yes, for how long?
23. What were the reasons for leaving the hostel?
24. What were the reasons for coming back at the hostel?
25. Initially why did you choose to live in a hostel?
26. For how long do you plan to live in a hostel?
27. How did people get access to live in a hostel?
28. Who controls access to the hostel now?
29. Do you like living here?
30. What are the three main things you like about living here?
31. What are the three main things that you do not like about living here?

D. LIVING CONDITIONS

32. How many people do you live with in a room?
33. How many of them are men?
34. How many of them are women?
35. How many of them are children?
36. What is the maximum number of people allowed to sleep in one room?
37. What is the minimum number of people allowed to sleep in one room?
38. How do you share cleaning responsibilities?
39. Are there any problems caused by the way you live in the hostel?
40. Are there any problems caused by the number of people sharing a room?
41. Do you feel respected by the people you live with?
42. Please explain why.
43. Do you feel you are in good terms with the people you live with?
44. If no, what can be done to fix the situation?
45. What personal belongings you have there?
46. What furniture/equipment/facilities does the hostel provide you with?
47. What stuff do you share with your roommates?

E. RURAL-URBAN CONNECTIONS

48. How often do you go home?
49. How often do you write letters or call home?
50. Do you support a home in the rural areas?
51. How often do you send money home?
52. How much do you send home?
53. Do you send goods home?
54. If yes, what kinds of goods do you send home?
55. How often do you send goods home?
56. Which area do you like the most between the rural and the urban?
57. Please explain why.
58. Which area would you like to live in without being constrained by employment opportunities? Village or hostel or both?
59. Please explain why.
60. What do you think are the connections that exist between the rural and the urban areas?
61. If everything went financially well, what would you do?
62. What would influence your decision?

F. LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

63. Are you employed?
64. If yes, how are you employed?
65. Where do you work?
66. If not, what do you do in order to survive?
67. For how long have you been working there or doing what you do?
68. How much do you earn?
69. What was your first employment since you came to the hostel?
70. Where did you work?
71. How did you get that job?
72. For how long did you work there?
73. How much did you get paid?

74. Why did you leave that job?
75. What is your ideal job?
76. What are the obstacles you are encountering in getting it?
77. Do you have any other kinds of survival strategies other than your main work?
78. If yes, what are those?
79. What are the challenges facing the hostel dwellers?
80. What impact do these have in one's life?
81. What happens when people lose employment?
82. What options do they have?
83. Do people move from being employed into being self-employed?
84. If yes, what impact does that have on the life at the hostel?
85. What impact does this have on the rural-urban connections?

G. LAND AND LIVESTOCK

86. Do you have/own land?
87. If it is a yes, where is it?
88. If it is a yes, what s the size of your land?
89. If it is a yes, how do you use your land?
90. Who does that work?
91. Is the produce increasing or decreasing?
92. What causes that?
93. Do you have livestock?
94. What kind of livestock?
95. Is the produce increasing or decreasing?
96. What causes that?
97. Who takes care of the livestock?

H. GENDER AND REPRODUCTION OF PATTERNED RELATIONSHIPS

98. When were women allowed to live in the hostel?
99. For how long are the allowed to stay in the hostel?
100. What bring women to the hostel?

101. What impact does having women in hostels post-apartheid have on family relations?
102. What is the impact of having women in the hostels? Is it good or bad?
103. Why?
104. How is the family structure being affected by the movements of family heads (husband and wife) from rural to the city and vice versa.
105. Are there women who stay in the hostel without relations to a male?
106. How does that happen?
107. Do women live separately to men or then intermingle?
108. What are the advantages of having women in the hostels?
109. What are the disadvantages of having women in the hostels?
110. Are women mostly employed or unemployed?
111. Are you happy with the presence of women/men in hostels? Why?
112. Are women given the same respect as men in hostels? Why?
113. Are there special terms and conditions applying to only women?
114. Do you have a woman or women (wife, daughter, sister, and partner) that you brought here in the city/hostel from the village?
115. How many of them?
116. When did they come?
117. How are you related to them?
118. Where do they live now?
119. Are they working?
120. From the men that you brought here, is there any that has gone back and have not come back to the city?
121. Do you have a man or men (husband, son, brother, partner) that you brought here in the city/hostel from the village?
122. How many of them?
123. When did you come?
124. How are you related to them?
125. Where do they live now?
126. Are they working?
127. From the men that you brought here, is there any that has gone back and have not come back to the city?

THE END!

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

No.	Name of Group	Description	Date	Unit
1.	Elderly Men	Men (50-70 years), been at hostel for +15 years	09 March 2009	15
2.	Employed Men	Men, been at hostel for +15 years	11 March 2009	7
3.	Unemployed Women	Women, came through partners/relatives	23 March 2009	11
4.	Men	Men of all ages (20-40 years), came through relatives	04 May 2009	7
5.	Unemployed Women	Unmarried women, came through and live with partners	08 May 2009	8
6.	Traditional Dance Group	Mostly teenage women, came through and live with parents	16 July 2009	9
7.	Udumo Women's Soccer Team	Women who mostly live without partners	21 January 2011	6
8.	Siyanqoba Development Committee	Men	03 February 2011	2
9.	Tertiary Students	Young, unmarried, men, came through parents	03 February 2011	3
10.	Political Activists	Youth	4 February 2011	5

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These were some of the questions which were used in the initial focus group discussion with the participants:

HOSTEL

- What do you like about living in a hostel?
- What do you not like about living in a hostel?
- What changes have you seen taking place here since the past twenty years?

-Social:

-Economic:

-Political:

-Other:

- What change would you like to see taking place here in the near future?
- What are the problems that you see as related into being a hostel dweller?
- Were those problems there twenty years ago? Why?

GENDER

- What brings women to the hostel?
- What are the advantages of having women in the hostel?
- What are the disadvantages of having women in the hostel?
- What impact does having women on the hostel have on the family?
- What are the problems encountered by women living in hostels?
- Do women have different hostel rules and regulations which are only applicable to them?
- If you had a chance, what gender-related changes would you make here at the hostel?

ORGANISATIONS

- What are the different kinds of networks/organisations that exist in the hostel?
 - work related
 - political
 - religious (faith based)
 - social (stokfels)
 - funeral societies
 - support groups (HIV/AIDS)
 - soup kitchen (poverty alleviation)
- How do you get to know about these organisations?
- What are the reasons for people to join these different organisations?
- Do these organizations meet people's expectations? How?
- What kind of problems do you encounter in these organisations?